



WHOSE FAULT IS IT ANYWAY?

THROUGH WALL FLASHING

A common call-back for a leaky roof may have nothing to do with the roof but rather a badly detailed and constructed wall flashing. Best practices demand that the flashing membrane must come all the way out through the wall, hence the name "thru-wall flashing". **BIA Tech Note 7, Feb. 1985 (April 2001), states it this way:**

"Extension through Wall - All flashing should extend beyond the face of the wall to form a drip. Termination of through-wall flashing behind the exterior face of the wall is a dangerous practice and is not recommended."

Common practice in the field wants to ignore this warning for several reasons.

- They wish to use less expensive membranes that can not tolerate UV and must be held back according to manufacturers printed literature.
- Do not want to spend money for a stainless steel or copper drip edge.

Many of the rubberized asphalt manufacturers show details requiring that their flashing be held back at least ½", but do not show any drip edges in the detail. Is this implied permission to disregard Tech Note 7 or simply an oversight?

For a roof-to-wall detail to be successful it starts with the designer. It is vital that the designer realize that this detail needs to be developed, drawn and referenced by building section. Many times this is overlooked and decisions are left to others.

In a competitive building industry, architects, specifiers and design builders tend to concede to clients on this basic issue. Liability is high when delivering flashing details that do not measure up to industry standards. The savings on a job (<0.05% of job cost), by not bringing the flashing thru the wall, is a potential and costly liability when a flashing failure occurs. Prepare details and specifications that properly address the thru wall flashing.

Many owners see drip edges as unsightly to the aesthetics of their building. As design professionals, we need to be able to provide membranes that can tolerate UV exposure and come out through the wall without the need for the drip edge. One product is a new non-asphaltic laminated copper which fills this void and is a perfect bridge from rubberized asphalt with drip edges. Flashings can now be upgraded to copper with the money left over from the drip edge. Designers need materials that are designed to work and most importantly to shift the liability for flashing details away from the designer and client and back to the industry experts, where it belongs.

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