HOMEOWNER REPAIR GUIDE

AVOIDING HEAT DAMAGE

Most of the time, we focus on the damage that cold and wet weather can do to the systems of our house—but it's important to remember that the "Dog Days" of summer can also be destructive. By understanding the problems that can result from excess heat and humidity, you can take preventive measures to protect your home.

WHERE HEAT AND HUMIDITY DO DAMAGE

AREA	PROBLEM AND PREVENTION
Asphalt shingle roofs	During the last decade or so, we have become more aware of the damage that is done to asphalt roofing shingles by excess heat that moves through the roof from the attic below. This heat can drastically shorten the life of a shingled roof. The remedy is adequate venting. Most roofers now advise installing roof vents when you re-roof; there are numerous systems available, so you can choose the one that best suits your house. However, you can extend the life of your existing roof by adding a power vent to your attic, or even by installing a thermostatically-controlled window fan to move the hot air out.
Flat roofs over garages and porches	Over time, asphalt roll roofing on flat roofs over garages and porches is damaged by the sun. You can use roof coating *once* to renew the oils in the roofing material and seal hairline cracks. You might also consider using aluminized roof coating to reflect the heat of the sun, especially on roofs over living areas where heat builds up (such as enclosed porches or sun rooms).
Decks, fences and porch floors	Wood, both untreated and treated, is also susceptible to sun damage. All finishes on decks, fences, and varnished porch floors should be U-V resistant.
Exterior paint	Although the sun will inevitably take a toll on exterior paint, a good-quality paint gives you the longest life. However, paint can fail earlier on certain areas of the house—usually outside kitchens, bathrooms, or other rooms where excess humidity develops—when water vapor passes through the exterior wall. Miniature vents can be inserted at the top and bottom of each stud cavity outside problem areas, to allow air circulation.
Basement walls and cold water pipes	Basement walls and cold water pipes are susceptible to condensation during the summer, as humid air comes in contact with these cool surfaces. You might consider using a dehumidifier to control excess humidity in your basement. Cold water pipes can be covered with insulation jackets; and, if your toilet sweats excessively, you can insert a Styrofoam liner into the tank.

Damage from heat and humidity can be prevented, or at least reduced, by these relatively inexpensive measures. So, take the “bite” out of those Dog Days—and extend the life of your house systems.

Home Repair Resource center

Home Repair Resource Center empowers homeowners to maintain their homes for sustainable and diverse communities.

WWW.HRRC-CH.ORG **+1.216.381.6100** **2520 Noble Road, Cleveland Heights, OH 44121**

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