

Nuts & Bolts

Volume 28, Number 6
November-December 2010

a newsletter from Home Repair Resource Center

Before you send us your card, take a minute to congratulate yourself for all the hard work you did this year. Then, think back to your 2010 “to do” list and consider whether you accomplished all the projects that were on it. If you didn’t get to everything, you can start now to plan and prepare for next year’s repair season.

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It’s OK to brag

We know it’s not usually polite, but this time it’s OK to brag – really. Each fall, we ask all Project Repair participants to let us know how you used our services to complete repairs to your home this year. Your report should take only a few minutes, but it’s very important to help us document the “worth” of what we do here at HRRC.

Inside this issue you will find a card to fill out and return to us, listing all the projects you did in 2010 with the help of Project Repair. If you attended

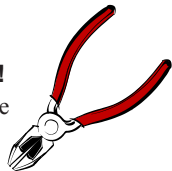
a workshop, used a handout or video from our library, talked to Jim about a repair, or borrowed tools, we’d like to know what repairs you did with that help. *No job is too small to tell us about*, because we count the **number of people** who report doing repairs, in addition to the **value of what they do**.

When you list a job, please provide enough detail that we can give it an appropriate value. For example, if you came to our ceramic tile class and then used what you learned to install
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Is there mildew in your shower area? Add an exhaust fan!

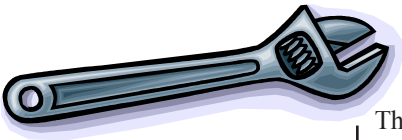
It’s often not difficult to mount a fan, connect the wiring, and run the exhaust duct to an outside vent.



Here's how you can support our work

HRRC's annual membership campaign will soon begin, when we seek donations to run the organization and to cover program costs that are not funded by the money we receive from our city government. We hope you will look for a letter and/or call from our volunteers and consider a gift to HRRC. We need strong support from people who know what we do – not only to help with our operating expenses, but also to show that the local community appreciates our work.

Donations to Home Repair Resource Center are never required to use Project Repair – you're always welcome to participate! But, if you are able to contribute, we'll be grateful for anything you can afford. You can mail your donation or drop it off in person (slip it through the Audio-Visual Return slot near the Project Repair entrance if we're not here when you come.)



Thanks to our 2010 workshop hosts

Thanks to the following Project Repair participants for hosting a workshop in 2010: Rose Armstrong, Geneva Foster, Aaron & Julie Lewis, Dionne Menefee, Laura Cooperman & Ben Kuester, Carla Martin, Rochelle Huffman, Tracee Patterson, JoAnn Parks, Monica Jackson, Eileen Murray, Beverly Terry, Maureen Gill, Liza Grossman, and Mike & Liz Gillins.

If you are interested in hosting a workshop next summer, the March-April issue of *Nuts & Bolts* will tell you how to volunteer your project. As a host, you'll need to participate in the workshop and pay for the materials that are installed. (HRRC can help LMI homeowners with part of that cost.)

Holiday Closings:

Thursday, November 11th
(Veterans Day)

Thursday & Friday,
November 25th & 26th
(Thanksgiving weekend)

Friday, December 24th
(Christmas holiday)

Friday, December 31st
(New Year's holiday)

*Plan ahead to get any tools
or information you'll need.*

Please note:

If you haven't used Project Repair's services during the last two years, we will remove you from our *Nuts & Bolts* mailing list in January, unless you receive our newsletter by email. Previous members can reactivate their membership at any time our services are needed in the future, and our workshop schedule can always be found on our website, www.hrrc-ch.org.

It's OK to brag

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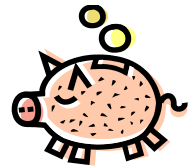
tile in your bathroom, tell us whether you put that tile on the floor, in the shower area, and/or on the other bathroom walls. With this information, we'll be able to give a value to your job and add it to all the others reported. The result will be one measure of how our Project Repair program impacted the homes of Cleveland Heights in 2010.

Before you send us your card, take a minute to congratulate yourself for all the hard work you did this year. Then, think back to your 2010 "to do" list and consider whether you accomplished all the projects that were on it. If you didn't get to everything you'd planned to do, you can use the winter months to prepare for next year's repair season. While it's still cold and snowy, attend one of our workshops, use our Resource Library, get some prices – you'll soon be ready to tackle those jobs when the weather warms up again.

Meanwhile, we ask that you get your list of completed repairs to us **by December 15th**. You can mail the completed card to our office, drop it off in person (use the Audio-Visual return if you come when the office is closed), email the information to rstager@hrrc-ch.org, or even call us at 381-9560 with your list.

This information is really important to the Project Repair program, so we hope that **each and every participant** will send in a list. We'll appreciate your help.

HRRC's Financial Fitness/ New Home Buyer Classes



Home Repair Resource Center's interactive Financial Fitness series will help you develop your money skills, provide you with strategies for improving your credit, and teach you how to protect your home investment. Call **381-6100** for information or to reserve your spot in these FREE classes (all 6 - 8 p.m.):

November *Classes to be held at the CH-UH Main Library, 2345 Lee Road*

- 2 Tuesday Creditworthy Equals Choices
- 9 Tuesday Power of a Personal Budget
- 16 Tuesday Understanding Mortgages & Refinancing
- 23 Tuesday Avoiding Mortgage Delinquency

December *Classes to be held at the CH-UH Main Library, 2345 Lee Road*

- 1 Wednesday Creditworthy Equals Choices
- 8 Wednesday Power of a Personal Budget

Bathroom exhaust fans

If your house is like most, you're waging a constant battle against mildew, condensation, peeling paint and wallpaper, and other problems caused by excess moisture in your bathroom. The most effective remedy is to install an exhaust fan that will draw the water vapor produced by your shower to the outside. The vapor will be exhausted through a pipe made of rigid or flexible metal or plastic to an exhaust vent mounted on the roof or, occasionally, on an exterior wall. (Never exhaust water vapor into an attic or crawl space, as major structural damage and/or health issues can result.) If you don't already have a fan in place, you will need to purchase an exhaust duct kit, in addition to the new fan.



The first step is to determine the kind of fan that will meet your requirements. It's important that the fan be strong enough to exhaust all the water vapor in the size bathroom you have. According to the Home Ventilating Institute, you can compute how powerful a fan you'll need by calculating the cubic area of your bathroom (length x width x height), divide by 60 (the number of minutes in an hour) and multiply by 8 (the number of recommended air changes in an hour). For an average-size bathroom, the minimum requirement is 80 cfm, but if you have one of the larger bathrooms sometimes found in older houses, you'll need a more powerful model. Remember, though, that it doesn't hurt to get a stronger fan than the minimum required; a better quality fan will generally move more air than a model of lesser quality.

You should also consider how noisy the fan will be when it is running. Better quality fans will emit 2 to 3 "sones" (a measure of sound level), while less quiet models may emit more than five sones. Check the packaging of the fan you are considering to identify its noise level.

It's easiest to run the exhaust duct to the nearest soffit; by venting it under the overhang of the roof, you can prevent rain, snow, or debris from getting into the vent pipe. Cut a hole in the soffit according to the directions in your exhaust duct kit, and mount the vent in place.

The exhaust fan is generally surrounded by a metal housing. You should install it in a central spot, near the shower area, at the high point of the ceiling. Unless you are replacing an existing fan, you'll need to cut a hole in the bathroom ceiling to mount the fan

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Bathroom exhaust fans

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body. Try to install the fixture where you can fasten it directly to a ceiling joist. If this is not possible, attach a wooden brace between two joists as a support for the fan housing, or use the special hanger that comes in some kits. Remove any insulation from the area where you will be mounting the fan, and, if you are replacing a light or an old exhaust fan, turn off electrical power to the circuit and disconnect the old fixture. Hold the fan housing against the ceiling and trace around it to define the hole to be cut; drill pilot holes at the corners and use a drywall saw or jigsaw to cut between them. The fan housing will cover any small imperfections in your cut, but too loose a fit will lessen the insulation value around the duct pipe. Secure the fan body in place.

The first step is to determine the kind of fan that will meet your requirements. It's important that the fan be strong enough to exhaust all the water vapor in the size bathroom you have. For an average-size bathroom, the minimum requirement is 80 cfm, but if you have one of the larger bathrooms sometimes found in older houses, you'll need a more powerful model.

If you are replacing an existing light fixture with a light/fan combination fixture, you can just enlarge the hole in the ceiling to accommodate the fan body and then use the wiring already in place to operate the new fixture. The fan will operate whenever the light is turned on. If you wish to operate the fan independently of the light, you will need to run a 3-wire cable between the fixture and the junction box, and mount a double switch in the box. (Depending upon the way the joists are positioned, and whether the room is on the first or second floor, you may need to cut into your ceiling and/or walls to get the wires where they need to go.) If your fan unit has a heater and/or timer, the wiring will be more sophisticated. In either case, follow the instructions from the manufacturer.

After you have secured the fixture in the ceiling and completed the wiring, connect the exhaust duct to the fan housing. Secure it around the vent shroud on the fan body with at least one screw or, if you are using flexible plastic, with dryer vent clamps. Replace the insulation, following the manufacturer's instructions about how far away it must be kept from the fixture; fans with lights or heaters may require you to add dams to keep the insulation away from the heat source. Then, install the grill cover on the fan unit in the bathroom ceiling.

It's easiest to run the exhaust duct to the nearest soffit; by venting it under the overhang of the roof, you can prevent rain, snow, or debris from getting into the vent pipe. Cut a hole in the soffit according to the directions in your exhaust duct kit, and mount the vent in place. If you route as much of the duct as

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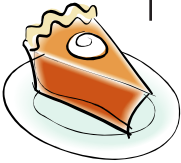


Workshop Schedule

Our November and December workshops will continue the series of classes on bathroom remodeling that we began earlier this fall – although many of the topics can be used in other areas, as well.

All classes are open to Cleveland Heights residents, and payment of a modest **materials fee** is now required. *(See our website for details, or call us for more information.)*

November



Installing an Exhaust Fan

Monday, Nov. 1st, 7 - 9 p.m.

Learn how to install an exhaust fan in your bathroom – how to cut the opening, route the exhaust vent, and wire the circuit.

Installing and Plumbing a Bathtub

Monday, Nov. 8th, 7 - 9 p.m.

The most challenging part of a new bathroom can be replacing a bathtub. Learn how to break up an old tub and get it out, and how to install the new tub, with water supply and drain lines.

Drywall Installation

Monday, Nov. 15th, 7 - 9 p.m.

You'll learn to measure, cut, and install regular drywall, as well as the water-resistant "greenboard" and concrete backer board that are often used in moisture-filled bathroom areas.

Sheet Vinyl Flooring

Monday, Nov. 22nd, 7 - 9 p.m.

Learn to work with sheet vinyl – how to determine how much flooring you'll need, how to cut and lay it out for a smooth, tight fit, and how to avoid common installation mistakes.

Ceramic Tile

Monday, Nov. 29th, 7 - 9 p.m.

You'll learn how to lay out and space ceramic tiles on a bathroom floor or wall, how to cut pieces for edges or around fixtures, and how to maintain and repair a tiled surface.

December

Installing a Toilet

Monday, Dec. 6th, 7 - 9 p.m.

Whether you'll be installing a new toilet or pulling up an existing fixture and re-installing it atop new flooring, we'll show you how to secure the toilet to the floor, hook up the water supply and drain lines, and make sure everything is working as it should.



Installing a Bathroom Sink & Faucet

Monday, Dec. 13th, 7 - 9 p.m.

Learn how to install a new sink in your bathroom, add a faucet, and hook up the water supply and drain lines. We'll talk about the different strategies necessary for wall-hung, pedestal, and vanity sinks.

Workshop fees make classes possible

Our regular attendees will tell you that the new workshop fees are “no big deal,” once you get the hang of it. Fearing that the cost would be high, one woman couldn't believe that she was paying so little “for such great value. I have seen prices of \$20 or \$30 for one class through some of the adult education programs, but by buying a card for ten workshops through HRRC, my cost was only \$5 each! Plus, I get real experience using tools – I don't just listen to a dry lecture.”

Another participant found that he didn't have to pay anything at all! As a dental student at a local university, he and his wife were living off student loans, so their income was very low. Since HRRC's workshop fees are based on a sliding scale, he fell within the lowest income category, where fees are waived completely.

The fee structure is a bit complicated, but people are encouraged to pick up the phone if they are confused. “It was really easy when I called the office,” another participant added. “The Project Repair staff helped me figure out what my cost would be. It wasn't hard.”

Some people have commented that, even with the fees, the workshops are an investment in their home. “With everything so tough financially, learning to do repairs myself really saves money!” said a recent attendee. “I guess the up side of losing my job is that now I have time to do the repairs I'm learning about.”

Because HRRC has tried to keep the classes affordable, the fee structure is a bit complicated, but people are encouraged to pick up the phone if they are confused. “It was really easy when I called the office,” another participant added. “The Project Repair staff helped me figure out what my cost would be. It wasn't hard.”



*Free advice
from the experts . . .*

information sessions presented by

Home Repair Resource Center

a community nonprofit organization

Remodeling Basements Defensively

Alex Pesta, City Architecture

If you are planning to finish your basement, learn what you can do to protect your wall and flooring materials from being damaged from water intrusion, mold, etc.

Wednesday, October 27th, 2010 - 7 pm

Conserving Energy with GeoThermal Heating & Cooling Systems

Jim Rudesill, Grace GeoThermal

Learn about geothermal systems and how they can reduce energy usage – even in an older home.

Wednesday, November 17th, 2010 - 7 pm



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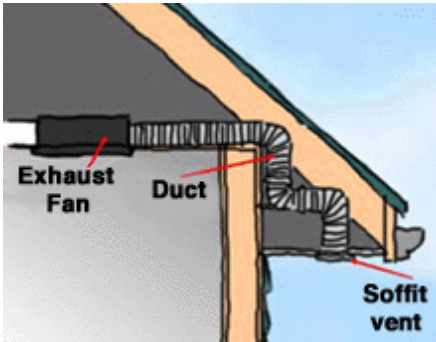
HouseMender University sessions are free and open to residents of any community. Sessions will be held at

**Cleveland Heights - University Heights
Public Library
2345 Lee Road**

Reservations requested – call (216) 381-9560

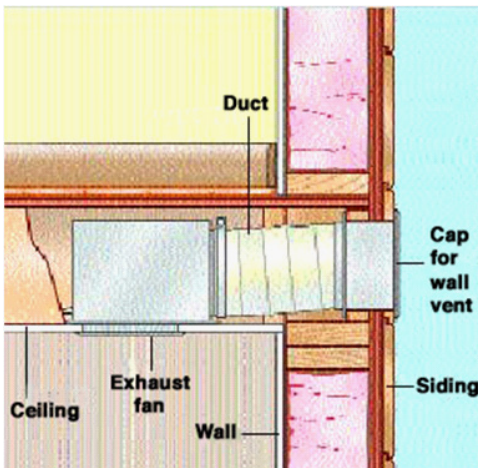
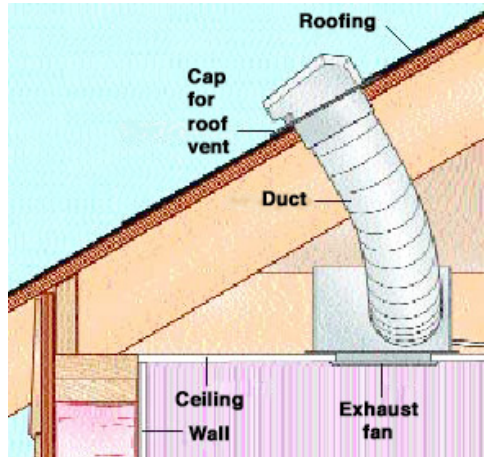
Bathroom exhaust fans

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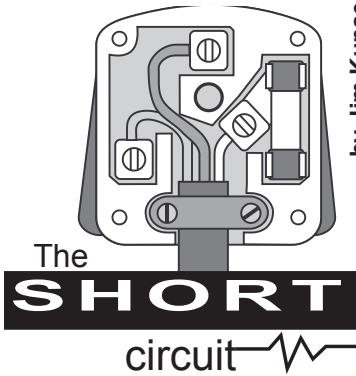


possible horizontally across the attic, you will reduce the chance that condensation might drip back down around the fan body. It can also help to cover the entire length of the duct with insulation wrap (see illustration to left).

If you can't run the duct to a soffit, the project will be a bit more complicated. You can install a vent through the roof, with a special cap that includes a damper (see illustration to right).



Another option is to vent the water vapor through the wall. There are even fans designed to mount on the bathroom wall, instead of the ceiling, and vent directly to the outside through hinged dampers similar to those used for clothes dryers.



by Jim Kunselman

Over 20 years ago, an acquaintance of mine was using a backhoe to dig a trench in the Slavic Village neighborhood, when he struck a natural gas line that ran alongside a building. He miraculously survived the resulting explosion that flipped his machine over backwards, but suffered some second- and third-degree burns. The pipeline he hit was an uncharted line run out to an out-building on the same lot.

About ten years later, while trenching for an electrical job, I myself hit a buried gas pipe running to a garage. Luckily, the line had been disconnected, but the whole

experience made me think about what had happened to my acquaintance and the potential danger these buried lines can pose.

That's why it's so important that all buried utility work done on a property have a permit (with a map) registered with the city building department. The mapping and permits ensure that the work is done to code and serve as an official record of where the utilities are on the property, and at what depth they lie.

Don't believe for a moment that utility lines are buried too deep for you to hit. In the years since a house was built, activities such as erosion, landscaping, grading or excavating may have changed the depth at which the utilities lie. Just recently, a friend digging in her front flower beds found that her gas line was only six inches under the soil surface!

Formed in the 1970's, the Ohio Utilities Protection Service (O.U.P.S. – yes, you can say “OOPS”) is a nonprofit that serves as a link between utility companies and contractors and residents planning any digging. Though O.U.P.S. does not physically mark lines, they do convey digging and excavation requests to the member network of utilities and underground facilities (such as TV cable, gas, electrical, water, sewer and phone companies).

Ohio law says everyone MUST contact O.U.P.S., at least 48 hours before any digging or excavation work – even for smaller or personal projects, like digging fencepost holes, anchoring supports for decks and swing sets, planting trees, removing tree roots and driving landscaping or electrical grounding stakes into the ground.

In most of Cleveland Heights, the buried utilities enter at the front of the property (from the street) and the overhead utilities enter from the rear. But that does not hold true for all properties in the city. A corner property for example,

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The Short Circuit

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may have some or all the buried utilities coming in from the side of the lot. It's quite possible that your neighborhood has a sewer to the rear of the lots, as a portion of my street does.

Call before you dig! An Ohio law says everyone **MUST** contact O.U.P.S., at least 48 hours but no more than 10 working days (excluding weekends and legal holidays) before beginning any digging or excavation work – even for smaller or personal projects, including but not limited to digging fencepost holes, anchoring supports for decks and swing sets, planting trees, removing tree roots and driving landscaping or electrical grounding stakes into the ground.

Don't believe for a moment that utility lines are buried too deep for you to hit. In the years since a house was built, activities such as erosion, landscaping, grading or excavating may have changed the depth at which the utilities lie. Just recently, a friend digging in her front flower beds found that her gas line was only six inches under the soil surface!

You can contact O.U.P.S on the internet (web address: www.oups.org) or by telephone: 1-800-362-2764, or you can just dial 8-1-1. When you call, a staff person will assign a reference number for your job. Keep this number with your property records so that you can refer to it at a later date, as necessary. It is proof that you made contact with O.U.P.S., and it's the only way they can look up a past job ticket.

Before the utility companies come out, you'll need to indicate the area where you intend to dig. Usually this is done by using white spray paint or white flags to mark the area to be excavated. (Be sure to ask what procedures they want you to follow, as things do change over time.) Each utility company will then mark on the ground the location of any lines that are buried in the work area you indicated.

Taking this precaution can save you a lot of grief, so it's worth the effort. Of course, the next time I see my yellow lab trying to bury his bone in the yard, I guess I'll have to ask him if he has an O.U.P.S. ticket to start his job....



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