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AIRVENT UNIVERSITY LESSON PLAN

AIRVENT UNIVERSITY LESSON PLAN September 2025

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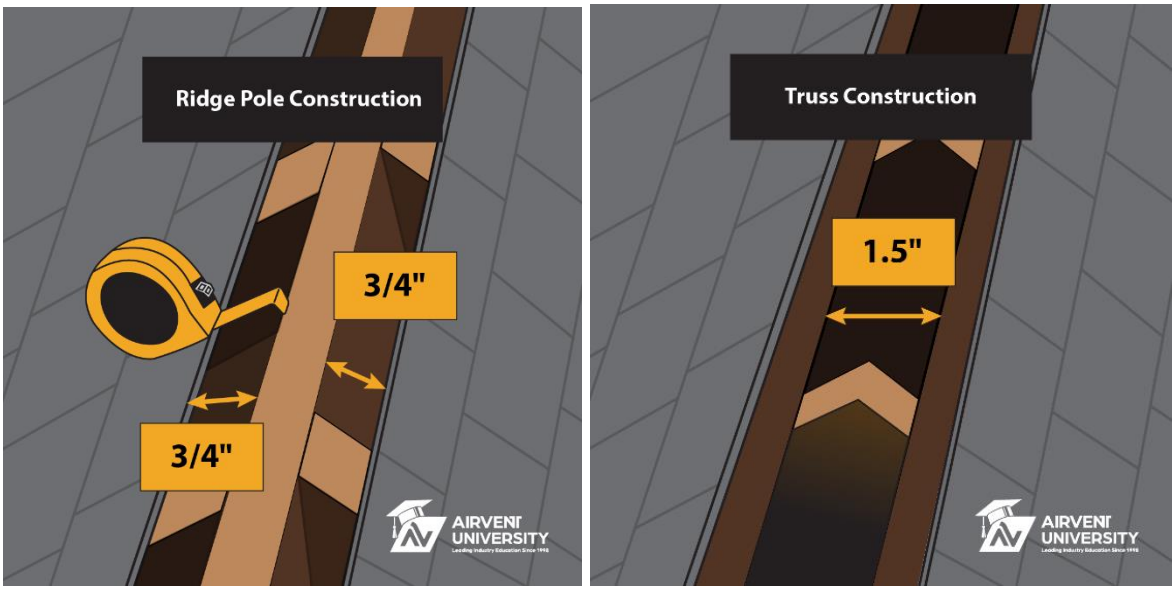
Be Careful Cutting that Ridge Vent Airflow Slot

We are often asked if cutting a wider airflow slot for the ridge vent will allow the ridge vent to exhaust more air out of the attic. The answer is “No.” In fact, wider is potentially problematic. Here are some general tips based on the incoming questions we field but please always follow the installation instructions specific to the brand of ridge vent you are installing.

When there is a center board (also called ridge board or ridge pole) at the peak of the roof, cut a ¾-inch wide airflow slot on each side of the center board after clearing the width of the center board itself. This will result in an overall airflow slot that is approximately 3 inches wide. However, 1.5 inches of the slot is obstructed by the center board. That’s OK because the ridge vent will still have an airflow slot that is 1.5 inches wide, clear and free (**see “Ridge Pole” illustration**).



For truss construction there isn’t a center board involved at the peak of the roof. There’s no ridge board or ridge pole. That means there’s no center board to clear when cutting. Instead, the airflow slot is cut 1.5 inches wide grand total (**see “Truss Construction” illustration**).

Wider DOES NOT Increase Airflow. The slot width is designed to match the amount of Net Free Area (NFA) or airflow capacity provided by the ridge vent itself. Cutting the ridge vent slot wider than the installation instructions require DOES NOT increase the ridge vent's NFA capacity. That's because the actual airflow through the vent (*once the ridge vent airflow slot in the roof deck is cut correctly*) is restricted by the airflow openings on the vent itself. The ridge vent only allows so much air to pass through. For example, a ridge vent listed as having 18 square inches of NFA per linear foot has physical airflow openings on the vent that allow 18 square inches of NFA per linear foot. (1.5 x 1 linear foot = 18. Likewise, .75 x 1 linear foot = 9 on both sides of the vent or 18).

While it may seem logical that cutting an extra wide slot into the peak of the roof deck will then allow more air to pass through the ridge vent, the fact is the manufacturer designed the vent with a specific amount of airflow openings. Those airflow openings in the ridge vent determine the amount of air that passes through the vent regardless of how extra wide the slot is cut into the roof deck. They are the final passage point.

There is the potential for weather infiltration if the airflow slot is cut too wide. The ridge vent must fully cover the airflow slot cut in the roof deck without that slot getting close to the vent's airflow openings, which could then allow weather entry. Again, refer to the ridge vent's installation instructions.

What About Slot Length? Here is some guidance for the airflow slot length. Cut the slot length along the ridgeline stopping 6 inches from the end wall or hip intersection. Stop the slot length 12 inches from a chimney or an intersecting ridgeline. For maximum curbside appeal that homeowners tell us they love, run the actual ridge vent to the very end of the horizontal peak of the roof (even though the airflow slot stops short of the end of the roof peak). This results in a clean, continuous, uniform line or profile at the top of the roof instead of an uneven, discontinued line or profile when the ridge vent stops short of the end of the roof.

To test your knowledge about what you learned in the September 2025 Lesson Plan please take our short 5-question Pop Quiz.