

## **How high should my flashing reach?**

The following are excerpts from BIA Tech Note 21:

*Flashing should be securely fastened to the backing system and extend through the face of the brick veneer. The flashing should be turned up at least 8 in. (200 mm).*

*Drainage materials can be installed above flashing consisting of materials configured and installed to allow water to flow around any mortar droppings. The use of these materials does not negate the importance of good workmanship and may not be required in all situations. Use of drainage materials may result in the mortar bridging the air space at certain locations, possibly above the flashing level. This may lead to isolated spots of dampness on the interior or exterior wythe. At worst, it could lead to a path for water penetration.*

The best answer to the title question is that your cavity should be free of mortar droppings, but in the “real world” your flashing should run up the backer wall to a height above the anticipated level of the mortar droppings. Common practice with CMU block backer walls is to tuck the flashing in the first mortar joint. This conforms to the 8” minimum suggested by BIA, but if a typical 10” tall drainage material is then installed the mortar droppings will land above the flashing. These devices require that we extend the flashing to the next mortar joint at 16” or utilize a reglet or termination bar to reach up 12” or 14” to keep the mortar droppings beneath the top of the flashing.

If the 10” tall drainage material is replaced with 2” of pea gravel or a flashing/drainage material such as York’s Flash-Vent™, which eliminates the requirement for the drainage material altogether, the anticipated height of the mortar droppings is now 8” to 10” lower. Now the flashing can be hung in the first mortar joint with confidence that any mortar droppings will remain beneath the level of the flashing. The reduced width of flashing can also pay for a termination bar and eliminate having your flashing hanging in the mortar joint of the backer wall exposed to the elements awaiting enclosure. This issue is addressed in another of our discussions on details to avoid.

Another advantage to lower flashing heights is that you can now place your wall ties lower. This becomes important with the introduction of new seismic and wind load requirements for these ties. Having access to the first mortar joint of the backer wall for ties will become very important in some zones.

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