

Vent Pipes and Duct Tape

By: *Inspector Weeks ... 613.290.3697*

Our current home has a black and white pipe sticking out of the roof. The top of the pipe and the joint between the black and white pipe have old duct tape on them and the top of the pipe appears to be blocked with the tape. Do you have any idea what this pipe is for and why the tape? Olivier D. Chelsea

Your question got me curious, so I came to your home and took a look. The pipe that you are referring to is the plumbing vent pipe, also referred to as a plumbing stack that allows air to enter your plumbing drainage system. The first thing I noticed is that the top of the pipe covered in duck tape needs to be opened. Although, I understand your concern about snow and rain getting into the pipe, it is far more important that your sewer/septic gases leave the building in the proper place. This pipe is not meant to be covered. The second issue is the extension, the extra white pipe. This was most likely added to re-direct sewer smells away from the back deck portion of the house. By extending the pipe, the off-gassing air will flow differently and the sewer smells will not drop to the back deck area. You could remove the white pipe completely, however it is more than likely there for a reason and best left alone. It may have been extended to maintain an open pipe above the snow line. It is very important to remove the tape at the top.

Three out of the last four inspections have had bathroom exhaust vent pipes leading directly into the attic. This is wrong. It is so important to have that stale, humid, moist air from your bathroom leave the building. By venting it into the attic, you are creating a perfect environment for mould and rot. I have touched on this subject before, but would ask you, my readers to check that your vent pipes exhaust through the soffit or gable, or if need be, through a proper goose neck roof vent like the two in the picture. I was glad to see that Olivier's vent pipe's were exhausting outside of the house. With minor adjustments to the duct work itself and increasing the fan's ventilation capabilities to a minimum 110 cfm (cubic feet per minute) your current bathroom ventilation configuration should work well.



I welcome your questions please forward them to, Inspector Weeks, c/o Peter Weeks Home Inspections PWHI@sympatico.ca or by phone at 613.290.3697. **Peter Weeks** has been a Chelsea resident for 19 years. As a general contractor since 1988, he has been doing **Residential Home Inspections** for about four years. He is an Associate Member of OAHI (Ontario Association of Home Inspectors), CAHPI (Canadian Association of Home & Property Inspectors) and a member of the BBB. **He is a Qualified and Fully Insured Inspector.**