Few parts of a roof get less attention than the vents, yet they help decide how hot, damp, and durable your attic is. When you replace a roof in Huntington, one of the questions you may hear is whether to install a ridge vent, box vents, or something else. Here is how the two most common options compare.

Why Attic Exhaust Matters

Long Island's humid summers bake attics, and cold winters bring condensation when warm indoor air rises into a cold space. Good ventilation moves air in at the eaves and out near the peak, keeping the deck drier and the shingles cooler. Near the water in Huntington Bay, Centerport, and Cold Spring Harbor, extra moisture in the air makes airflow even more worthwhile.

Ridge Vents

A ridge vent runs along the peak of the roof, with a slot cut in the deck and a low-profile cap covering it, usually finished with matching ridge shingles.

Strengths

- Continuous exhaust along the whole ridge, which spreads airflow evenly
- Low profile, so it blends in on Colonials and Capes
- No moving parts to fail
- Works naturally with soffit intake

Drawbacks

- Needs a long enough ridge, which some hip roofs lack
- Depends on adequate intake at the eaves
- Quality varies, and some designs allow wind-driven rain in during severe storms
- Poor installation, such as an undersized slot, limits performance

Box Vents

Box vents, sometimes called static or louvered vents, are individual covered openings placed near the ridge. Several are usually spread across the roof.

Strengths

- Work on short ridges and complex hip roofs
- Simple, inexpensive, and easy to add
- Familiar to nearly every roofer

Drawbacks

- Exhaust is concentrated in spots, leaving some areas less ventilated
- More visible from the street
- More roof penetrations means more places for leaks to start
- Need several units to match a ridge vent's capacity

Side-by-Side Comparison

Factor Ridge Vent Box Vents Airflow pattern Even, continuous Spot-based Appearance Low profile More visible Best roof shape Long ridges Short ridges, hips Penetrations One long cut Several cuts Relative cost Moderate Low to moderate Dependence on intake High High

These comparisons are general. Actual performance depends on the attic, the intake, and the quality of installation.

The Rule You Can't Skip: Intake

Exhaust vents only work if air can get in. Soffit vents, continuous or individual, bring cool air in low, and the exhaust pulls it up and out. If soffits are blocked by insulation or paint, even the best ridge vent will underperform. Ask your contractor to check intake and use rafter baffles where insulation meets the eaves.

Don't Mix Vent Types

Combining a ridge vent with box vents, turbines, or powered fans on the same roof can short-circuit airflow. The exhaust vents start pulling air from each other instead of from the soffits, leaving parts of the attic stagnant. Older Capes and Colonials that have been re-roofed several times often carry a patchwork of vent types. A replacement is the right moment to simplify to a single approach.

How Much Vent Area Do You Need?

General guidelines relate the net free vent area to the attic floor area, and shingle manufacturers and building codes reference them. Exact requirements vary, so ask your contractor to show how they calculated the vent area for your roof rather than just naming a product. Cathedral ceilings, finished attics, and homes with several separate attic spaces, which are common on large roofing contractor Huntington NY estates in Lloyd Harbor and Cold Spring Harbor, may need their own plan for each section.

Questions to Ask

1. Is my ridge long enough for a ridge vent?
2. How will you confirm that soffit intake is clear?
3. Will old vents be removed and sealed, or left in place?
4. How are you protecting against wind-driven rain on this design?
5. Will the ventilation plan be written into the contract?

Permits and Local Offices

Ventilation changes are usually part of the overall roofing scope, which typically involves a permit. In unincorporated hamlets such as Huntington Station, Greenlawn, and Dix Hills, contact the Town of Huntington Building Department. In incorporated villages such as Northport, Lloyd Harbor, Huntington Bay, and Asharoken, the village has its own building department. Confirm with the right office. Suffolk County also requires home improvement contractors to hold a Suffolk County Consumer Affairs license.

Choosing a Contractor Who Thinks About Air

A trusted provider of **Long Island Exterior Co.** should talk about ventilation before the tear-off, not as an afterthought on the invoice. Many shingle warranties tie coverage to adequate ventilation, so a documented plan protects you later.

Final Thought

For most simple gable roofs with a decent ridge, a ridge vent paired with clear soffit intake is hard to beat. For short ridges or tricky rooflines, well-placed box vents can do the job. Whichever you pick, balance and installation quality matter more than the name on the part.

About the Author

Tom B. is a writer with years of experience in residential roofing and attic performance. He explains building basics in plain language for homeowners planning a roof project.