

## Wall Flashing for Exterior Chimneys

**Q.** *What's the right way to flash an exterior masonry chimney to the wall of the house?*

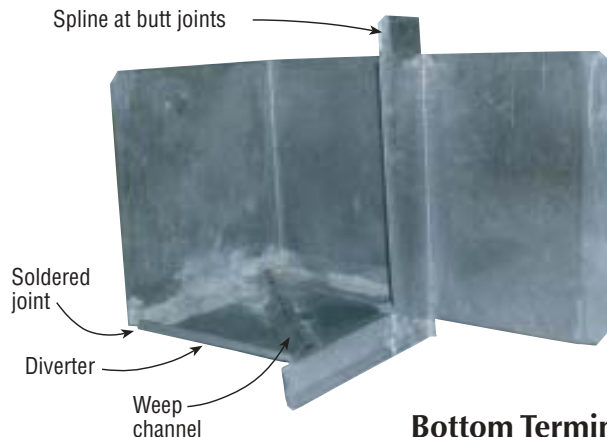
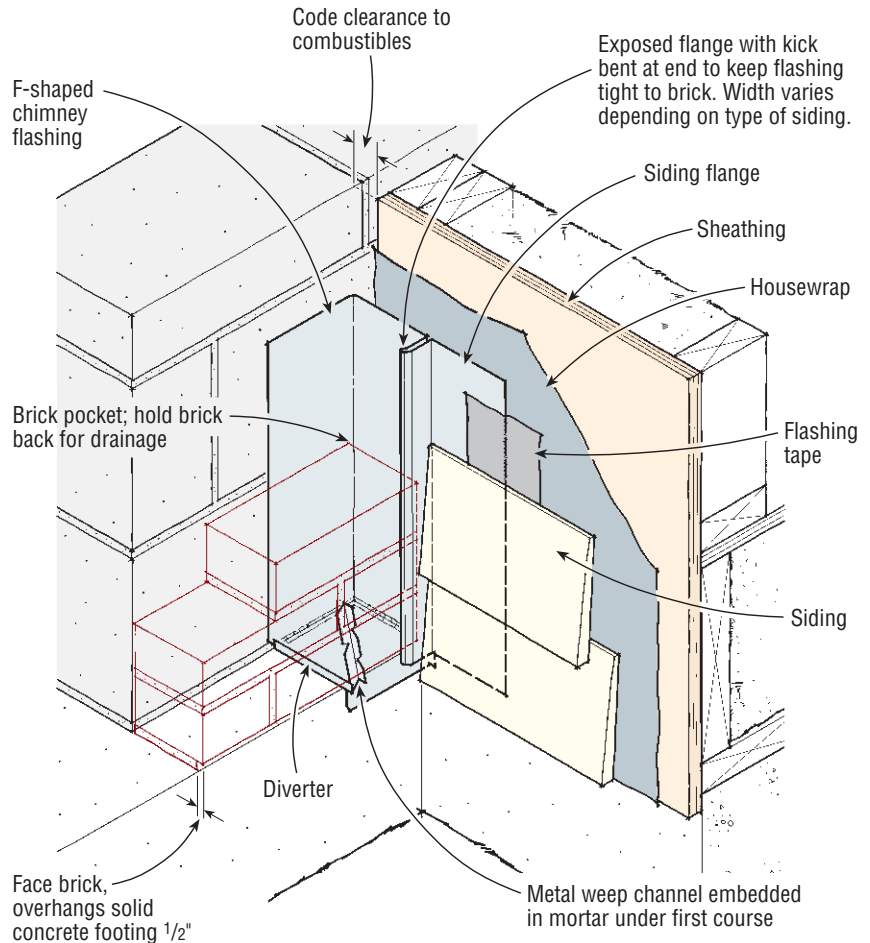
**A.** *Fred Seifert responds:* I bend an F-shaped piece of flashing that catches the ends of the bricks where they meet the house (see sketch). I use copper, lead-coated copper, or aluminum and bend the flashing in long pieces on an 8-foot brake. We nail the flashing to the sheathing over the housewrap, then use a flashing tape to seal the outside leg of the flashing to the wrap. The mason spaces the brick away from the flashing so that any water that gets in can drain down and out the bottom through metal weep channels embedded in the mortar under the first course of brick.

Depending on the height of the house, it may take three or more lengths of flashing to reach the roofline. At the joints, I prefer to butt the pieces rather than overlap them, because it looks better. To maintain a tight seam on the exposed kick where the flashing meets the brick, I run a spline several inches long inside the bend to span the joint.

*Having passed down the family business, Fred Seifert, Sr., works for his sons, Fred and John, at Seifert Brothers Construction in Mattituck, N.Y.*

### Reinforcing a Slab Over Disturbed Soil

**Q.** *I need to pour a thickened-edge slab foundation for a two-story garage apartment across a recently dug 2-foot-wide utility trench. The backfill over the trench has subsided, and I'm concerned that the foundation may sag and crack at that point. Can I add rebar to the slab to span this area, or is it better to mechanically compact the trench area?*



**Bottom Termination**

**A.** *Jay Meunier responds:* If you're in doubt but don't plan to have an engineer's compaction test, you should probably do both. Run over the trench area with a plate compactor, preferably, or at minimum a jumping jack, and top up any depression that's left with the clean stone that you spread under the slab. Then, for added insurance, add rebar to the slab where it crosses the trench area. Use 1/2-inch or 5/8-inch rod, placed perpendicular across the trench and spaced 12 inches on-center. Cut the rebar so you have at least 1 to 2 feet of length over the undisturbed soil on both sides of the utility trench.

*Jay Meunier was formerly owner and operator of a residential concrete business. He is now an estimator for Pizzagalli Construction in Burlington, Vt.*

### **Floor Tiles vs. Wall Tiles: What's the Difference?**

**Q.** *One of the tile showrooms where my remodeling clients shop has tiles displayed in two sections, one for floors and one for walls. What's the difference between a floor tile and a wall tile? Is it possible to interchange the two?*

**A.** *Michael Byrne responds:* On the surface, a tile's suitability for a particular application may not be readily apparent. The strength and durability of a tile are determined by the ingre-

dients making up the bisque, or body, of the tile; the type of glaze used, if any; and how long and at what temperature the tile is fired.

Wall tiles often have decorative or high-gloss glaze applications that are really appropriate only on wall surfaces. Floor tiles, on the other hand, may be used for either floor or wall applications.

How to tell the difference? The best way is to ask the person selling the tile for a written recommendation. Most of the time, this comes in the form of a manufacturer's brochure that states that a certain tile is approved by the manufacturer for use on floors and walls, walls only, or floors only. There may also be a statement regarding a tile's use on a countertop. If no such written recommendation is available, a written statement on the tile seller's company letterhead will suffice.

Keep in mind that some porcelain floor tiles have a somewhat granular surface meant to reduce slipping. Some of these tiles are also manufactured specifically for use in commercial applications where heavy-duty cleaning machinery will be used to maintain the floors. Because such heavy cleaning is impractical in a home or office, the textured surface may get dirtier than if it were installed in a commercial or industrial setting.

While it is important to know the wear qualities, a tile's absorbency

should also be considered. Tiles that are bulletproof in one application may not be appropriate for another. For example, Saltillo and other hand-molded paver tiles are used extensively for floors both indoors and outdoors (in nonfreezing climates), but they should not be used in wet interior applications where hygiene is an issue because they are generally too absorbent.

Some tile sellers may refer to the hardness scale for assessing the appropriateness of a tile for floor use. While that might be helpful, with today's new glazes it may not be as reliable as it once was. Hardness is important, but surface texture may be more of a good marker. For example, some porcelain tiles that are extremely hard would be too abrasive for normal home or office use.

Don't rely on anecdotal "advice" if you don't have specific experience with the tile you choose: Ask your dealer and get an assurance in writing if you have any doubts.

*Contributing editor Michael Byrne is an expert tilesetter and consultant in Los Olivos, Calif., as well as author of many JLC articles and the book Setting Tile.*

**Got a question?**  
Send it to Q&A, JLC, 186 Allen Brook Ln., Williston, VT 05495; or e-mail to [jlc-editorial@hanleywood.com](mailto:jlc-editorial@hanleywood.com).

