

Rooftop Modifications: Expectations Matter

When it comes to scrap collection systems with blowers mounted above roof, make sure your expectations are clear about who does what.

Installing a trim and fiber waste collection system isn't something most companies do every day. For many of our customers, the installation or renovation of a trim collection system is the first time members of the current management and maintenance team have dealt with the situation. In many cases, company maintenance personnel and roofing contractors simply aren't aware of the special preparations required to ready a roof for a blower and how to mount and seal the roof penetrations.

If you're considering a system with above-roof blowers, the blower mounting will be designed to spread the weight across several joists and beams depending on the existing roof structure, existing roof load and the new load of the new blower(s). Below is an overview of the two most common types of blower-to-roof connections and supports.

A direct welded or bolted connection to the roof structure is often the best way to go. It costs a bit more but you'll find that it is more durable than other options. If you're dealing with a standing seam roof, this is often the best choice because it permits rain run off down the troughs between the standing seams. The image below shows an example of a blower directly connected to the roof joists.



Blower platform connected through roof directly to steel beams and joists. Roofer must seal 4 additional roof penetrations. Higher Cost, More Durable.

1. Another option is to use "sleepers," treated lumber beams placed on the roof deck and sealed into the roof membrane, as shown below.



No matter what type of roof you have or how much weight the blower and support structure may add, Puhl always recommends consulting with your roof contractor and engineering company before any changes are made. These professionals will be familiar with the existing loads on the roof and can calculate what additional reinforcement if any will be required when adding weight to the roof system.

The costs associated with rooftop curbs, flashings, final seal and reinforcements are typically not included in our quotes and here is why:

1. The local contractor you used to install your roof is responsible for the “whole” roof if it leaks. If you use multiple vendors to seal a roof, it can get confusing in the long run about who is responsible for repairing leaks.
2. Your local roofing contractor is going to be the least-cost alternative in the long run. Any roof service required can be combined into a single visit if there are leaks around new or old equipment.
3. Though Puhl is very experienced in trim and dust collection systems and has an excellent grasp of roof-related engineering principles, we are not licensed to perform roofing work.

So, when you’re looking to add or renovate a scrap collection system with above-roof blowers, make sure that you’re crystal clear about who’s doing what. And don’t forget to leave a little room in your budget for your roofing contractor.

Questions? Just give us a call at 615.230.9500 or email us at sales@gfpuhl.com.