

DIY Project: Changing House Foundation Vents to 1/8"

Store information and prices are as of November 2019. Call for updated info.

This document summarizes the presentation given by Susan Rogers at the Nov. 5, 2019 meeting of the Coalition of Firewise Communities. Susan added 1/8" screen (hardware cloth) behind the existing 1/4" screen on the foundation vents on her house. She paid a contractor to also add it (from inside the attic) to their roof gable vents. The small attic vents already had 1/8" screen.

- The 1/8" material is called **hardware cloth** in the stores, not screen. It comes in 3-foot wide rolls and 4-foot wide rolls, and is priced by the running foot. B&C Ace Hardware also has it in 4"-wide rolls and sometimes 6"-wide rolls.
 - Aluminum window screen is NOT recommended, because the holes are so small, dust will accumulate in them and interfere with the needed ventilation for your attic or foundation.
- Hills Flat sells 3-foot-wide 1/8" hardware cloth for \$2.99 a square foot. Penn Valley True Value sells the 4-foot-wide material for \$1.99 per square foot, which is half the price of the Hills Flat material. They are not identical. The more expensive Hills Flat hardware cloth is made of very smooth wire. The wire of the less expensive hardware cloth is rougher in comparison. It is hard to tell the difference unless you look closely.
- Tools and supplies needed: wire cutters or wire snips, a staple gun and staples, measuring tape, black marker (such as a Sharpie) to mark cutting lines. A hammer may be needed if a staple won't go all the way in, and pliers if you need to pull one out. You will also need a fairly large work surface, about 4'x6'.
 - Recommended: leather gloves (to protect your hands from very sharp wire edges), goggles, and apron to protect clothing.
- When you remove the existing vents, label each of them as to the location. It may be easier to return each one back to its same location (for example, because the nail holes will line up when you put it back).
- When measuring and cutting the hardware cloth, you don't have to be exact and precise, as long as it fits where you need it to go. The material is flexible and bends easily – just be careful because the wire edges are very sharp. Roll it in the opposite direction to take out the curve. If you have to trim a little bit off, wear goggles because the tiny bits you trim off could fly into your eyes. (Glasses aren't enough, the tiny bits can fly in from the side or underneath and cause eye injury. If you don't have goggles, line up your cut, then close your eyes as you make the cut.)

Good luck!