

Velux's New Electric Venting Skylight

Motorized skylights have a couple of obvious advantages. First, it's a heck of a lot easier (and more fun) to push the button on a remote control than to teeter atop a footstool trying to manipulate a 10-foot-long turning rod. Second, by adding a rain sensor to the skylight, you can guarantee that Mother Nature won't pull any fast ones while you're not at home.

But motorized skylights also have an obvious disadvantage: the motors add cost and complexity, which discourage contractors and homeowners from installing them. That said, we think the new Velux Model VSE electric venting skylight has overcome those old bugaboos, especially the issue of complexity. We had the chance to examine one of the new models up close at the recent *International Builders Show* and found it very intelligently designed and easy to operate. In fact, it offers homeowners one-button access to light and air and provides contractors with the ease of one-box, one-purchase, one-wire installation.

The unit comes with a preinstalled, concealed motor and control system, as well as two rain sensors for automatic operation when the weather turns sour. As shown in Figure 12, the VSE has a single, 20-foot, hard-wire connection designed for a standard junction box. The 120-volt connection is stepped down to run the 24-volt motor. The skylight also comes prewired to accommodate a variety of motorized interior and exterior sunscreening accessories, should the client want them.

"Before we introduced the VSE, the electrician basically had to build the system on-site, and it could be a real headache," says Velux Product Manager Joe Patrick. "The new design eliminates eight low-voltage wiring

connections, five mounting procedures [e.g., motor, keypad to wall, transformer to wall], the purchase of four extra parts, and the need for a dedicated outlet to plug the transformer in." Patrick tells *EDU* that the VSE will save about \$200 in electrician's labor alone.

Each VSE comes with a slim-line infrared remote control that can be programmed to operate up to 10 skylights (individually, in sets, or in unison).

Velux also unveiled a new motorized exterior awning for the VSE, called Electric HeatBlock. As shown in Figure 12, the awning is made of black, PVC-coated fiberglass mesh. Hidden underneath the top panel, fully encapsulated from the weather, is the 24-volt motor and drive gear. The same infrared remote that controls the VSE will operate the awning.

"All Velux skylights come standard with double-pane, low-e glass," Patrick says. "But in some climates and situations you can get too much sun for low-e glass to handle sufficiently. In those cases, the best way to block more solar heat is before it even reaches the glass." Patrick tells *EDU* that the awning will block about 40% of solar heat, while retaining a view that's like looking through a window screen.

The VSE skylight is available in eight sizes and with two different glazing options. Prices range from \$595 to \$1,260, excluding the flashing kits. The HeatBlock awning runs from \$275 to \$315. All of the motors and electronics come with a five-year warranty.

For more information, contact Velux America, Dept. M, P.O. Box 5001, Greenwood, SC 29648-5001. Tel: (800) 283-283; Web site: www.velux-vse.com.

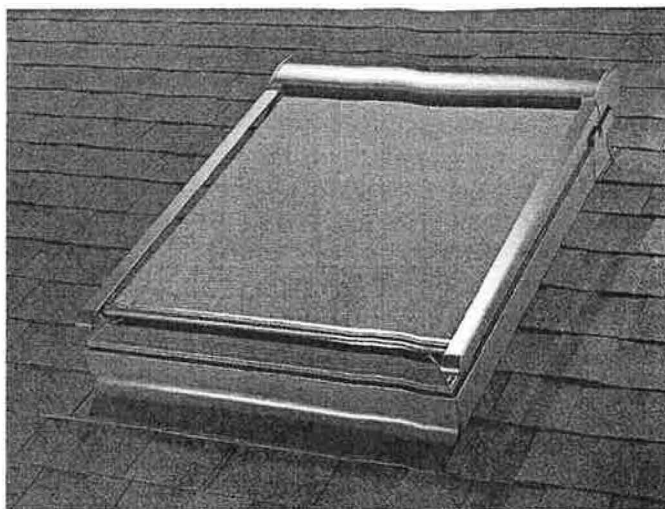
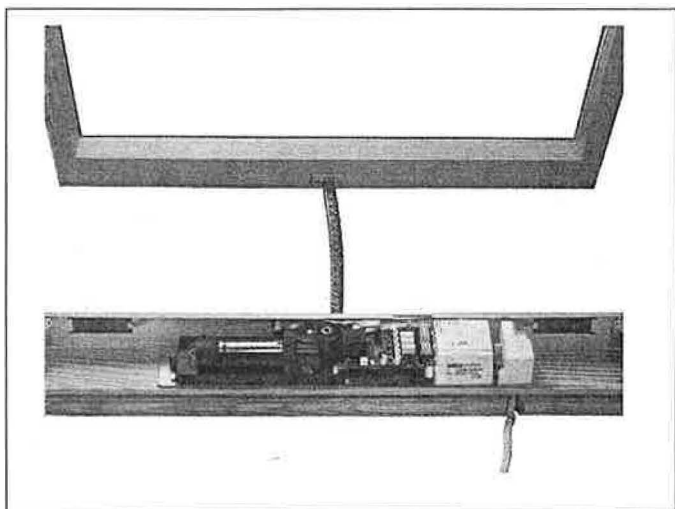


Figure 12 — (Left) The VSE's motor, transformer, and associated wiring are all seated inside the frame, eliminating the need for an electrician to cobble systems together on-site. (Right) The new HeatBlock motorized awning screens out about 40% of incoming solar heat before it hits the glass.