

DRYWALL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF NEVADA

DCAN-SW

Representing Nevada, Arizona, and California

Get Rid of the Rip with 54" Board!

Approximately 65-70% of residential production homes in Las Vegas have a 9' ceiling height. Standard drywall panels are 4' wide and are installed with the factory tapered edge running perpendicular to the framing members. Therefore, in homes with 9' ceiling heights, workers need to install and finish a 1' wide piece of drywall on the walls (as pictured). This 1' piece is commonly referred to as a "Rip" or "Belly Band". The Rip piece is typically installed in the middle of the wall; however, it can be placed at the top or bottom of the wall as well. Installing the **Rip at the top or bottom of the wall is preferred** to the middle location because the cut edge can then be placed against the floor or ceiling, however this makes tough ergonomics on the labor as they have to bend down or reach up to work on the Rip.



The use of a 1' wide Rip is not the optimal installation on 9' tall walls. Instead, drywall manufacturers produce 54" wide panels for use on 9' tall walls. 54" board is rapidly gaining in popularity nationwide because of the improved quality provided to homebuilders and labor efficiencies created for workers (who remain in short supply in Las Vegas).

Nearly every manufacturer, subcontractor, drywall hanger, and finisher I have interviewed would prefer to use 54" drywall. Each can cite a multitude of benefits and reasons why this makes sense, the most obvious of which is that the **9' tall wall will now only have one factory-edge to factory-edge tape joint in the center** to finish. This provides a stronger joint with better crack resistance and ultimately a cleaner finished product for the home buyer.

Now for the bad news. The drywall panels cost about 8% more, but keep in mind that 54" board is only needed on the walls, not the whole house, so it is typically not that many sheets per home. **This minor cost increase can be mitigated to some extent by specifying 54" board in your scope of work and contract up front.** This way drywall subcontractors will bid it in a competitive manner and not as a change order. As 54" board becomes widespread in Las Vegas, the benefits and economies of scale will become apparent as they have in other markets. Also, consider again that the workers are more efficient when using 54" board, so using 54" board in your homes should assist your drywall subcontractors in **securing labor** for your projects while ultimately **improving the quality** of your finished product at a minimal cost.

Please ask your drywall subcontractors about this and specify 54" board for your new projects in 2019. Let's work together to "Get Rid of the Rip". If you have any questions or would like to set up a presentation in your office, please contact Steve Danko at the number below.

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