

Roofs Require Preventative Maintenance

By Basil Housewright, Jr.

With almost every wind or rainstorm, insurance agencies receive calls involving roof leaks. Many of the roof leaks are the result of maintenance issues. Roof coverings and seals consist of many components. Several of these components may require periodic maintenance in order to continue to serve their intended purpose of keeping the rain from leaking into your home. Most typical roofs on homes have flashing in the valleys and slopes of the roof. Flashing is also used around chimneys, which stick up through the roof. Much of this flashing is sealed with the use of roofing tar materials. This is a soft pliable material, which is applied to the areas around flashing to assist in sealing out the elements. This roofing tar material hardens and cracks with age and must be periodically reapplied in order to prevent roof leaks.

The roof shingles and flashing are also nailed down to the wooden roof decking below the shingles in many areas. These nails loosen and may even come out over time. These nailed areas of the roof's shingles and flashing need to be re-nailed periodically in order to prevent roof leaks. Care must be taken to properly nail roofing materials, as nails driven in open areas will create leaks. It is suggested a **“roofing repair specialist”** be used to make such repairs.

There are many pipes, which stick up through the roof. These are vent lines for your plumbing, heating and air conditioning systems. The vent pipe usually is installed with a lead or rubber seal, which fits under the roofing material to form a watertight seal. If these are not properly installed leaks can occur. Also over time the material the vent seals are made of may harden and crack and allow water to leak through the roof. Also animals such as squirrels have also been know to cause damage to these seals. The seals may require periodic repairs or replacement to prevent leaks.

Some homes are outfitted with devices to ventilate the attic area of your home. These may be wind turbines or powered ventilators. These venting devices also have some type of seals around them. Over time these seals may weather and deteriorate which necessitate repair or replacement.

Some homes have skylights installed through the roof. These skylights have seals, which may weather and deteriorate which necessitate repair or replacement.

During the heavy rain and windstorms we experience, roofs can leak for the above mentioned reasons. The first thought of the homeowners is my roof is damaged and needs replacement. Many times the roof requires only minor and inexpensive repairs as mentioned above, however if ignored and allowed to leak even so slightly over time, major damages can be caused.

It is our recommendation you have a qualified **“roofing repair specialist”** inspect your home's roof every 2–3 years. More often as the home ages and the roof becomes older. Problems can be detected and corrected very inexpensively if performed as preventive maintenance. The cost of these minor preventive maintenance procedures are often much less than your deductible you will have to pay if you allow your roof to leak and cause major damage. Roofs are like any other piece of equipment on your home, you can take care of it and it will serve you well or you can ignore it and someday it will let you down, usually during a heavy rainstorm.

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