

Think It's Time For a New Roof? Check for These Warning Signs

Here are five telltale signs that your roof is ready to be replaced.

Remember to check your roof's condition from the ground; walking on a roof is dangerous. If you have trouble seeing the shingle surface, use binoculars.

1. Granule Loss. Those tiny granules play an important role in weatherproofing your roof by protecting it from the sun's ultraviolet rays and improving the roof's water-shedding capabilities.

Excessive loss of protective mineral granules can be confirmed through visual inspection. If there are black spots on your roof due to the loss of granules, it is time to re-roof.

2. Missing Shingles. A roof tends to age evenly, so if you have several shingles that are missing or broken, the uniformity of your roof's protective value has probably been lost. Missing or torn shingles leave the roof structure exceptionally vulnerable to water damage and rot, and can expose nearby shingles to a domino effect of wind and rain damage.

3. Curls or Cracks. As shingles near

the end of their useful life, they may noticeably curl, split and lose their water resistance. A quick scan of your roof is usually all it takes to detect these obvious signs of aging.

Because the sun's ultraviolet rays cause the most damage to roofing surfaces, signs of deterioration are likely to first show up on the western and southern exposures of your roof.

4. Leaks. If your roof is relatively new and a localized leak has suddenly appeared, you probably only need to have the roofing repaired, not replaced. But if you notice several leaks or stains and wet spots on the underside of the roof deck or rafters in the attic space, a new roof is definitely in order.

5. Overall Age. In general, asphalt shingles have a service life of 20-40 years, depending on their composition, local climate conditions, quality of installation and regular maintenance.

Once a roof is approximately 20 years old, it should be visually inspected each autumn for telltale signs of deterioration.

Because asphalt shingles age gradually, homeowners have plenty of time to con-

sider replacement options once it comes time to re-roof. The key is to replace the roof before it is worn out and you are forced into a hasty decision.

To Re-cover Or Not

Once you've decided to re-roof your home, the next question is whether to remove the old shingles, or to place the new roof over the old.

In general, your old shingles can be left in place if the existing deck is in good shape and the shingles are not warped or curled.

However, local building codes often set the maximum number of roofs that may be installed before it becomes mandatory to tear off the old and start anew. Roofing experts usually suggest that no more than two roofing layers be placed on a home.

An excellent publication on selecting and installing a new roof is available from the Asphalt Roofing Manufacturers Association. Entitled *Reroofing: Protecting the Value of Your Home*, this informative pamphlet can be purchased by sending \$1 to ARMA Publications, HP Department, PO Box 2532, North Babylon, NY 11703.