

New Advances in Roof Shingles Put Homeowner in Driver's Seat

The typical roof shingle has undergone some dramatic advances in recent years.

Architects and homebuilders regularly specify these specialized shingles for new homes, but they are now readily available for re-roofing as well.

According to the Asphalt Roofing Manufacturers Association, a wide variety of shingles can be found that incorporate all or some of these unique performance and architectural features.

Laminated or Architectural Shingles

Perhaps the most popular specialized asphalt shingle today is the laminated shingle, which is manufactured with one or more layers of "tabs" or cutouts, to create additional thickness to the shingle. Combined with special shadowing effects, laminated shingles give visual depth and a custom look to a roof. Many new laminated shingles have the dramatic appearance of slate, tile or wood shakes or shingles without the higher cost associated with those products.

Fire-Resistant Shingles

The demand for high-level fire resist-

ance has grown dramatically in recent years, especially in the brushfire-prone areas of the West and Southwest.

Asphalt shingles have long been certified for fire-resistance with Class A, B or C fire ratings. These ratings are established through nationally recognized standards and tested by independent laboratories or testing agencies.

Class A-rated products meet the most stringent fire-resistance criteria, and most fiberglass-type asphalt shingles have Class A fire ratings. A shingle's fire-resistance rating is shown on the packaging label.

Wind-Resistant Shingles

In high-wind and hurricane areas, wind-resistant shingles can provide additional protection for a home's roof and, by extension, its contents.

These shingles typically use a special factory-applied adhesive, special fastening requirements or integral locking tabs to further secure the roof to the structural decking.

In addition, most wind-resistant shingles are installed with six nails per shingle rather than the traditional four.

Certified wind-resistant shingles carry a package label showing that they have been tested for wind resistance by an independent laboratory or testing agency.

Algae-Resistant Shingles

In warm, humid areas of the United States, algae-resistant shingles can help homeowners protect their roofs against shingle discoloration and damage from algae attack. These specialized shingles are partially surfaced with zinc or copper-coated ceramic granules to inhibit algae growth.

Be Consumer Wise

Before purchasing any roofing product, consumers should fully understand the product's performance characteristics and limitations, as well as the guarantees, terms and conditions of both the shingle manufacturer and roofing contractor.

For additional information about asphalt shingles, visit the Asphalt Roofing Manufacturers Association's Web site at www.asphaltroofing.org.