

Responsible Roof Maintenance

A systematic roof inspection and maintenance program is essential to the satisfactory long-term performance of any roof. Through such a program, potential problems can be found in their early stages or prevented altogether. Regularly scheduled inspections with reports can track the roof condition and aid in earmarking areas of special attention during future inspections of your roof system.

While the information here is intended primarily for conventional SBS-Modified bitumen roofs, the basic content is appropriate for most low-sloped roofs.

WHAT CAUSES ROOFS TO WEAR OUT?

- **Exposure From Natural Elements** - Sun, water, snow, ice, freeze-thaw conditions.
- **Exposure From Man-made Elements** - Air pollutants, building operational emissions & chemical deposits.
- **Structural Movement** - Building settlement or expansion/contraction & differential movement between the building's structural elements.
- **Biological Fallout** - Vegetation (trees leaves, pollen, algae, dust, dirt, etc.).
- **Standing Water** - Facilitates the accumulation of matter that affects the roof.
- **Not Addressing Issues Promptly** - Small problems can lead to larger problems.
- **Forgetting About Maintenance** - Perhaps the single biggest cause of premature roof failure.

WHAT CAN CAUSE ROOF PROBLEMS?

- **Extreme Weather** - Lightning, high winds, hail, etc.
- **Equipment Additions** - Added equipment that is improperly flashed and/or weather-proofed.
- **Trade Damage** - Punctures, holes, spills, etc. caused by non-roofing personnel on the roof.
- **Vandalism or Accidental Damage** - Similar to trade damage, but potentially more severe.

ROOF ACCESS

- Many roof problems are caused by individuals who have no legitimate reason to be on the roof or who do

not know or care about the proper precautionary measures required to protect the roof surface.

- There are some people, such as HVAC professionals, who may be long on a roof for non-roof maintenance related purposes.
- To advise anyone seeking access to the roof that certain precautions are advised, consider posting a sign similar to the one shown in the photograph to the right at appropriate locations across the roof.

CLEANING THE ROOF

- A roof should be cleaned on a regular basis and be kept free of debris at all times, including those periods between semi-annual inspections.
- Remove all leaves, branches, cans, bottles, rocks, soil, and anything else that can plug drains or cause puncture damage to the roof.
- Check all drains and scuppers to be sure they are clear and open.

INSPECTION

- A roof should have a complete inspection semi-annually in the spring and fall. It should also be inspected after severe winds or storms and after any structural damage to the building.
- During the inspection, the condition of all roof components listed below should be determined. Any defects found should be promptly corrected according to the roof manufacturer's guidelines.

ALL ROOFING & FLASHING SURFACES SHOULD BE CHECKED CAREFULLY FOR ABNORMAL CONDITIONS:

- Any signs of stress, i.e., wrinkles, blisters, etc.
- Evidence of mechanical abuse, i.e., punctures, cuts, etc.
- Unusual wear due to excessive foot traffic.
- Evidence of damage caused by chemical attack or other adverse reaction to substances discharged on the roof.

ROOF DRAINS

- Examine all drains and scuppers to ensure they are open.



- Be sure that all drain clamps are tight and in place.
- Be sure to clean all trash and debris, as it can settle at drain locations.

SEALANT

- Seal joints and sheet metal laps.
- Check sealant at masonry joints and sheet-metal laps.

WALLS

- Because walls are a common source of water intrusion into a building, wall construction including wall copings should be examined to ensure that they remain in a water-

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tight condition.

ROOFTOP EQUIPMENT

- Ventilators, air conditioning units, ducts, skylights, etc., should be checked for any signs of deterioration that could lead to leaks and associated problems.

ROOF ALTERATIONS

- Do not install TV antennas or make a roof penetration of any kind through a roof without first contacting the manufacturer for approval of the method and materials to be used.

EMERGENCY REPAIRS

Any roof leak should be reported to the membrane manufacturer immediately. Typically, in case of emergency temporary repairs may be made by maintenance personnel using readily available materials such as glass fabric and plastic roof cement. Confine temporary repairs to the immediate vicinity of the leak – the larger the temporary repairs, the more costly the permanent repair is likely to be. All permanent repairs should be completed using a manufacturer approved roofing contractor.

ROOF MAINTENANCE MINIMIZES PROBLEMS

Implementing a maintenance program can not only help your roof maintain a good cosmetic appearance, but also ensures optimum performance. Such a program can minimize damage to the interior along with additional costs of interior and exterior repair.