

Preventing Roof Leaks

Roof leaks are the most frequent source of water damage to buildings. Whether it is flat or pitched, asphalt or composite, every roof type can fail, allowing water to damage the building.

Connecticut's cold winters, wind storms, and hurricanes make roof leaks more likely to happen here than in other states. Inspect roofs before the start of hurricane season in June and before winter sets in. Also inspect after severe weather, the installation of equipment, or performing maintenance to equipment, chimneys, or other structures on the roof. Early discovery and correction of minor problems helps extend the life of the roof and prevent water damage.

Guide for Discussion

General Inspection

- Check for deteriorated, missing, or damaged roofing materials.
- Check all rooftop penetrations.
- Are seals intact around HVAC equipment?
- What is the condition of flashing around skylights, stack vents, etc.?
- Is there water staining (inside/outside)?
- Are roof drains, gutters, downspouts, scupper, etc., free of obstruction?
- Is there adequate insulation/ventilation in attics?
- Is there corrosion on underside of metal deck roofs?
- Is it free of vegetation?
- Is there snow loading?

Flashing

Many problems blamed on roofing materials are actually related to flashings.

- Carefully inspect the roofing materials near flashings for signs of breaks or moisture. Blisters in are an indication that moisture may have worked its way beneath the roof membrane through the flashings.
- Look for punctures, broken laps or seams, separation of flashings from vertical surfaces, and signs of weather deterioration. Flashings that face the sun deteriorate more rapidly than others.
- Check that the roofing felts and base-flashing sheets are tightly adhered to the cant strip. Gently tap the flashing mid-way between the roof and the vertical surface to check whether it is loose.
- Check for water staining on the inside and outside of walls and parapets.
- Check metal counterflashings for deterioration and to see that they are properly in place.

Consult a roofing expert for specific concerns or for repairs.

Additional Discussion Notes

Remember Inspect roofs after strong winds, hail, heavy snow or long, continued rain.

Attendees _____

Information from the National Roofing Contractors Association and the Asphalt Roofing Manufacturers Association manual or Roof Maintenance and Repair

Questions? Ask your Supervisor or CIRMA Risk Management Consultant.