

Preventing Leaks on Flat Roofs

Because water can't run off a flat roof, these roofs require more care and maintenance than pitched roofs. Inspect after severe weather, the installation or maintenance to equipment, chimneys, or other structures on the roof. Remember, one windblown plastic bag can clog a roof drain in a moment, causing serious damage.

Guide for Discussion

Flat Roofs Drainage

The drainage system on a flat roof is critically important. Inspect all roof drains frequently. One clogged drain can cause thousands of dollars in damages.

- Is there pooling/ponding of water on roof?
- Check the roof deck incline. It should be unobstructed and permit free drainage. Look for sagging and depressed areas, standing water or water-stained areas.
- Plant growth should be removed. Areas where roots have penetrated the roof membrane should be repaired.
- Look for broken and clogged drains. Make sure leaders and strainers are free from clogs.
- Look for standing water around drains; the drain may be too high or in the wrong location.
- Look for defective drain flashings. Check that the roof membrane is securely clamped in the drain clamping ring.
- Check that gutters slope downward to the leader a minimum of 1/16 inch per foot of length.

Flat Roof Gravel Stop and Metal Edge Inspection

The roof-edge should be inspected for:

- Damaged, loose, or deteriorated overhangs and fascia boards.
- Flashing flanges that have separated from the roof.
- Movement of edging in relation to the roof deck or wall.
- Bitumen drips under the gravel stops and down fascia boards.
- Missing or loose gravel stops and metal roof-edge strips.
- Split and cracked stripping felts.
- Open or broken joints between metal pieces.

Consult a roofing expert for specific concerns or for repairs.

Additional Discussion Notes Foot traffic on roofs can result in damage to the roofing membrane. Flashings can be kicked and punctured by individuals working on rooftop equipment or leaning over parapet edges. And a dropped tool can easily puncture the roof membrane. Roofs are often a target for vandalism, too. Therefore, roof traffic should be kept to a minimum, and access to the roof should be restricted.

Remember Inspect roofs after severe weather, such as 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.