

Tips: When to Re-Roof from TRW.



Q: How do I know my roof needs repair or replacement if I have never noticed a leak?

A: There are other signs aside from noticeable leaks that indicate your roof needs attention:

Missing or torn shingles expose the roof to water damage and rot, and make nearby shingles more susceptible to being blown away. Old shingles will curl, split and lose their waterproofing effectiveness. These weakened shingles will be more likely to be blown away by wind gusts.

Rusted or missing flashing can result in leaks (flashing is the metal that surrounds chimneys, skylights and vent pipes and often is found in the valleys where roof sections meet.)

If you can't get up on the roof to inspect for these problems, check gutters, downspouts and splash pans for evidence of decay or damage. Broken pieces of paint and scraps of roofing may be visible. Indoors, look for discolored plasterboard or cracked paint and peeling wallpaper.

While a roof is a good investment, it is also a big one. If you determine that your roof is beyond repair and you need a new roof, be sure to do some homework. You have two basic options: you can replace your existing roof, which means tearing it off, or you can have new roofing put on directly over the old roof. With this second method, new membrane is placed over the existing roof and the roofing material is installed.

Choose a good roofing contractor. As with any contractor you hire, the roofing contractor should have a proven track record and a list of references you can check.

Start with two or three bids from reputable contractors, and be sure the products, services and warranties are well explained in writing so you can compare them.

Check to see if the companies you are considering have a permanent place of business, a telephone number, and a state contractor's license which is current, active and in good standing.

Ask for proof of worker's compensation insurance for the company's employees as well as a certificate of proof if the company carries liability insurance. If sub-contractors are involved, insist on seeing proof of their insurance coverage, too. With today's high cost of insurance, some contractors are either under-insured or not insured at all.

Insist on a re-roofing permit where required. Check with your local building department. Lack of a permit may require you to re-do your roof at your expense to correct code violations. Also check that the contractor is properly licensed to do business in your city or community.

Insist on proper lien releases. Do not make final payments until you have them. If subcontractors are involved, it is extremely important that you obtain lien releases from them too or you may end up paying twice for material and labor. Once you've chosen a roofing material, ask whether the contractor can provide a manufacturer's warranty on the material. Ask for three or four references -- including a couple of roofs they did more than a year ago and take the time to check them out. In addition to driving by to look at them, knock on doors or call and make sure the contractor actually did the work. Ask the homeowners how they liked working with this company; was the job well managed, did they clean up well, if there were problems did they respond quickly and to their satisfaction? Would they hire them again?