

ROOF STRUCTURE

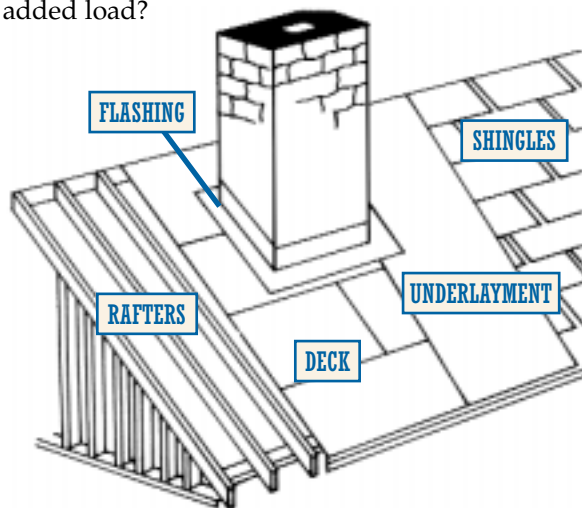
A roof is much more than just shingles. When you replace your roof, be aware that it is a system of integrated parts including felt or underlayment, ventilation, insulation, and shingles. Without considering the whole package, you could be looking at major roof or attic problems down the road. The contractor you select should thoroughly inspect your roof and explain the entire roof system. The key to waterproofing your home's roof is flashing. Flashing, if installed correctly, directs streams of water from these points of entry: skylights, chimneys, vents, valleys, eaves and rakes. Copper, galvanized steel and aluminum are the most common materials used for flashing.

How do you know if you need new shingles?

Asphalt shingle replacement is needed when shingles show evidence of curling, splitting, and loss of surface granules. Popping nails may be noticeable and a significant number of shingles are broken or missing.

What about re-roofing over an existing layer?

A common rule of thumb indicates that a second asphalt roof (but not a third) over an original is acceptable if the first coating provides a smooth nailing surface and there is no decay under the first roof. When re-roofing over existing asphalt shingles, the installer should replace any broken or missing shingles. Another issue to consider before adding the extra weight of a second layer of shingles is, can the structure withstand the added load?



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

National Roofing Contractors Association

For the name of a member contractor in your area
1-800-275-6722 • www.nrca.net

Asphalt Roofing Manufacturers Association

For general information about asphalt roofing
202-207-0917 • www.asphaltroofing.org

Suffolk County Executive's Office of Consumer Affairs

To check reliability and license status of contractors or to file a complaint
631-853-4600 • www.co.suffolkcountyny.gov

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County

For reliable answers to your individual questions, call the Consumer HelpLine 631-727-7850, ext. 374
Email: jl9@cornell.edu

Information Provided By

Suffolk County Executive's Office of Consumer Affairs

PO Box 6100 • Hauppauge, NY 11788

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County

423 Griffing Avenue, Suite 100
Riverhead, NY 11901-3071

631-727-7850

www.cce.cornell.edu/suffolk

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What You Should Know About Asphalt Roofing and Choosing a Contractor

CORNELL Cooperative Extension
of SUFFOLK COUNTY

A new roof is a big job, and a big investment. Information provided here will be limited to hiring a contractor to install asphalt-roofing shingles, which are the most commonly used material on residential roofs nationwide. Use the following information collected from Cornell Cooperative Extension resources and professionals in the roofing industry to help you make informed decisions about selecting the product and the contractor for your job.



Steps to A Successful Roofing Job

- ▶ Determine the scope of the job. Are you going to re-cover an existing roof or install a new roof?
- ▶ Familiarize yourself with the types of asphalt shingles.
- ▶ Find a professional roofer and negotiate a fair contract.
- ▶ Monitor the job from start-to-finish to ensure that work is being done properly.

Choosing Roofing Materials

Arm yourself with roofing options by asking contractors to show you samples of the brands and styles of roofing that he recommends, and question him about the advantages and disadvantages. You may also want to visit a local roofing materials distributor to obtain product literature and see the various shingle choices available.

There are two basic types of asphalt shingles. Each consists of a core material that is coated with asphalt then covered with colored mineral granules. The core, or base material, may be either organic felt or fiberglass. Most asphalt shingles are three-tab shingles (Figure 1). To protect against algae/fungus growth in warm, moist climates, asphalt shingles are available with special algicide granules made of zinc or copper.

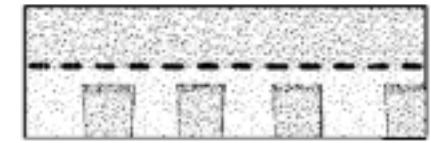


THREE-TAB SHINGLES
Figure 1

Organic Shingles consist of a wood-fiber base that is saturated with asphalt and coated with colored mineral granules. Besides adding color, the granules protect the asphalt from UV rays, and their weight beefs up the shingles' resistance to wind. Organic shingles are typically recommended over fiberglass shingles in extremely cold or windy areas. Most roofing materials are categorized as Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Class A, B or C. Class A being the most fire resistant, followed by B and C. Most organic shingles carry a Class C rating.

Fiberglass Shingles consist of a fiberglass mat, top-and-bottom layers of asphalt, and colored mineral granules. They are lighter in weight than organic shingles and are more resistant to heat and humidity. They carry a Class A fire resistance rating.

Laminated Asphalt Shingles (Architectural) consists of two or more layers laminated to create a three-dimensional effect that mimics a wood shake look. These can be either organic or fiberglass matting. Laminated shingles are solid across their entire length and are significantly more expensive than 3-tab shingles (Figure 2). They weigh more and have longer warranties – typically 30 to 50 years.



LAMINATED ASPHALT SHINGLES
Figure 2

Quality Indicators of Asphalt Shingles

Contrary to popular belief, weight is not a reliable indicator of the durability of asphalt shingles. Tests have shown that better predictors of a shingle product quality are related to the integrity of each component in the total structure, and the manufacturing controls. New roofing technology has produced lighter weight, high quality roofing products. The National Roofing Contractors Association (NRCA) recommends consumers use shingles, which comply with the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standards. Organic shingles should be identified as ASTM D 225 and fiberglass shingles should have a rating of ASTM D 3462. When you are ready to make a shingle selection, talk to a roofing/building supplier or a roofing contractor to get this number off the product packaging. Not all asphalt shingles on the market comply with these standards.

Roofs are measured on 100-square foot areas, or squares. Three bundles of 3-tab shingles typically equal one square. Laminates come four bundles per square. A square commonly weighs from 195 to 430 pounds.

Warranties

Warranties on asphalt shingles usually range from 20 to 40 years. According to contractors, most problems of either workmanship or material show up within the first five years. You should look for manufacturers' warranties that provide full coverage for labor and materials in the first three to five years after application. Many manufacturers currently train and certify installers using their products and will guarantee installation beyond existing material warranties.

Carefully review the manufacturer's warranty stipulations. You will want to know what responsibilities and financial obligation manufacturers assume if their products fail to reach their expected lives.

HOW TO CHOOSE A ROOFING CONTRACTOR

Before spending your money, spend time interviewing roofing contractors to get the results you expect – a quality roof system at a fair price.

- **Seek referrals** from neighbors who have had similar work done as well as roofing material distributors.
- **Look for a reputable company** with a proven track record that offers client references. Call the references; ask if they were satisfied with the contractor's performance. Visit homes to look at finished projects.
- **Check to see if the roof contractor is licensed** by calling the Office of Consumer Affairs in Suffolk County at 631-853-4600 (online at www.co.suffolkcountyny.gov). Ask if the contractor has complaints filed against his company.
- **Solicit at least three written estimates**, which details the materials and services to be provided. Cost is only one factor in pricing and must be balanced against the quality of the materials and workmanship. Evaluate the following:
 - the intent and ability of the roofer to stand behind his warranty
 - the roofer's knowledge of the complete roof system, including ventilation and shingle underlayment
 - higher costs for designer or architectural shingles
- **Ask for written proof of insurance** covering workers' compensation, property damage, and personal liability. Call the carrier to verify the information.
- **Look for members of professional associations** that have standards and a code of ethics for members, such as the National Roofing Contractors Association, National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI), LI Builder's Association, or Suffolk County Contractors Association.

What Should a Contract Include?

Once you have chosen a contractor, clarify and confirm all of the particulars with a written contract. Here's what should be specified for your protection:

- The contractor's name, address, telephone number and professional license number.
- A detailed description of the work to be done.
- A list of materials to be used with product, brand name, quantity, sizes, weight, and color.
- The agreed-upon starting and completing dates. Ask if bad weather and extreme temperatures can interrupt or postpone the roofing project.
- The total cost of the job, with a breakdown of labor and materials costs.
- A payment schedule. Before making the final payment, request a Contractor's Affidavit of Final Release to protect yourself in the event your contractor does not pay his sub-contractors or suppliers (otherwise, you could be held liable).

- Any warranties covering materials and workmanship (one year is the industry standard, but a 3–5 year offer is better). Ask if the warranty provides coverage against material defects for all roof components, not just the shingles.
- Terms outlining the application for and compliance with building permits if required.
- Details of how the contractor will clean up during or after completion of the job.
- A policy for putting all changes in writing if the scope of your project is modified while work is being done.

Think carefully before you sign a contract. Do you fully understand all of its terms and conditions? Are you getting what you really want? Do you know the cost of each item? Do you have a copy? You may choose to have your attorney review your contract.

What If I Change My Mind?

Under New York State law, you have an unconditional right to cancel the contract until midnight of the third business day after the contract was signed. Cancellation must be done in writing. Your contractor must provide you with this information.

Your Role on the Job

Let's assume you've done your homework and made your choices. You've got your contractor, a signed contract, and selected the shingles. Your job is over... right? Not quite.

- You – and your family – will need to be prepared for any disruptions that might occur such as noise, dust, debris, and possibly, a temporary plan for parking cars.
- **Be available** on the designated start date to inspect all materials to ensure they are exactly what were agreed upon in the contract.
- Establish a good working relationship with your contractor. Check the work in progress and ask questions if something doesn't look right. Agree on a price for any changes or extra work not specified in the original contract. Write these changes into the contract and have both parties' sign.
- Get written guarantees and warranties and file in a safe place. It's a good idea to save the wrapper from a bundle of shingles in case warranty problems arise. Also keep extra shingles handy for repairs.
- Before the job is completed, do a thorough inspection making notes of things you think need correcting.
- Do not give final payment until the work is finished to your satisfaction and you are notified that all suppliers and subcontractors have been paid.

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