



Insight

Insight from the Area's Leader in Inspections
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LEBAN ENGINEERING & INSPECTION SERVICE

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The Problem With Roofs ...

Roofs are born with their troubles. Rarely do their problems stem from things that happen to them after they are put into service. Almost all roof problems are "built-in" at the time of installation. It is because of these flaws that the average commercial roof in the United States lasts only seven years. Although built-in problems are numerous, they generally fall into one of four categories. The following are the primary causes of problems.

Overheating of Asphalt

Almost all built-up roofs have the asphalt overheated at the time of installation to facilitate ease of application and regulate the quantity of material that is applied between piles. This overheating can turn the asphalt to carbon, which is a very poor waterproofing agent with a short life span.

Moisture Entrapment

Moisture entering and becoming trapped in the roofing system during installation is a very common problem even in the hot summer months. Entrapped moisture under the roof or between the piles can do a great deal of damage down the road. Such problems as rotted and rusted-out decking, blisters, wrinkles, and curling can result from moisture entrapment.

Inadequate Attachment

The proper nailing pattern for a roof is quite different than that actually used by most roofers. On many roofs the number of fasteners used has been up to one-third the quantity specified. As a result of this fastener shortage, the roof is much more likely to blow off or slip.

Another common method of roof attachment can result in problems. When a roof is laminated (mopped) to the deck with asphalt, it is subject to the stresses caused by the normal expansion, contraction, and settlement of

the building. The result is a roof system that is fractured and split-out within a matter of months or a few short years.

Inadequate Detail Work

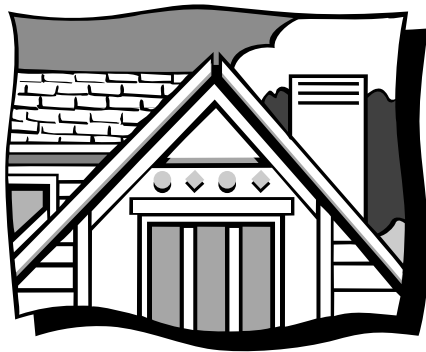
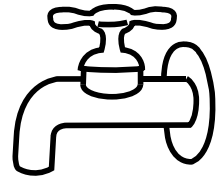
It is vitally important that the installers devote a great deal of attention to the flashing at areas such as roof penetrations and interruptions. If a leak is going to occur, chances are it will occur at one of these locations. When careful workmanship is not used in these crucial areas, the result is a problem roof.

The answer to these problems cannot be found in insurance policies or warranties. There is no insurance policy offered

Plumb Helpful!

Here are some ways to evaluate plumbing vents, fixtures, and water pressure:

1. Gurgling or air sounds indicate venting problems. Depending on the geographic location, vertical vents are required 5' to 12' from toilets.
2. Gently rock toilets and sinks to determine if they are secure.
3. Sink traps or piping which have been taped or caulked indicate that leaking has occurred. Tape and caulk are considered temporary repairs at best.
4. Evaluate water pressure by operating the three fixtures in the highest bathroom. Open the tub spout because it does not have a screen or flow restrictor, flush the toilet, and open the sink faucets. If the pressure in the sink is acceptable, the house pressure is acceptable. Check the shower head separately because it has a flow restrictor.



Home On The Web

Ever have a client that just could not keep a plant alive? Check out these two sites for great artificial plants.

- ➔ **Silk Plants**
silkplantfactory.com
- ➔ **Pool Plants**
pondliner.com

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Spring Cleaning

Spring is here and with it is the annual ritual known as spring cleaning. We recommend that during this annual review, your clients pay special attention to the condition of their homes—beyond cleaning windows and closets. We suggest that a thorough inventory be taken at least once a year and that property owners have their homes professionally inspected once every five years.

Chimneys. Once a year and after any major act of nature or severe stretch of weather, check the chimney for cracks or missing mortar. If a problem exists, call a qualified chimney sweep in your area.

Entrances. Are your doors and windows air tight? If you feel a draft coming in under any door, or around any window, it is likely that water can also come in during heavy rains. Likewise, your heating bill may be

higher as the warm air can seep out through these same areas. Home improvement centers can advise you on weather stripping.

Roof. Take a spot check of your roof (from the ground) and make sure there are no missing shingles or deteriorating fascia board.

Wood Structures. Wood patios and fences tend to experience deterioration from moisture. Check for rotting posts that may need to be replaced.

Nuisance Items. Spring cleaning is a great time to repair any nuisance items in the house as well.

Items such as a leaky faucet or toilet, cupboards that do not close, cracks in the plaster, or creaky door hinges.

If you did not change the air filter in your heater when winter began, now is a good time to do so. It is also a good time to check the batteries in the smoke detectors throughout your home.



This newsletter contains basic information on the home and general topics of interest. Due to the variations in homes, individual recommendations require a comprehensive evaluation. To reprint any article in this newsletter, please contact our office. © 1996-2002. All rights reserved. (ISMJ02)

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on a roof system per se. The warranty offered by the manufacturers literally protects them, not the owner of the building. Because of the exclusion clauses tacked on to many warranties, nearly everything that can go wrong with a roof is excluded from coverage. Legally speaking, when a manufacturer has issued such a warranty, it is, by contract, protection itself. More useful are guarantees offered by roofing contractors. But the value of such a document is directly related to the longevity and dependability of the firm that is standing behind it.

The best method of ensuring that the owner acquires a good roof is through the service of a capable home inspector or roof inspector. An inspector can be on the site to represent the interests of the owner at the time of installation. This method has proven to be effective. Because of its effectiveness, quality control inspections are being widely used throughout the commercial roofing industry at the present time.

When a reputable and experienced consulting firm is used everyone benefits. To not use an inspector at the time of roof installation ... is penny-wise and pound-foolish. For the relatively small cost of such a service, the owner can be assured of roof quality and performance for many years.

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