

## Roofing 101

You might not think much about the roof over your head — until it starts leaking onto your head, that is.

Roofs, just by their very nature, are out of sight, out of mind for most of us, and they don't get a good inspection like the rest of our house, which is more in our line of vision, might get. So let's take a closer look.

### WHAT ROOFS DO

Roofs shed precipitation (water, chiefly) and other things that fall from the sky like leaves, branches and other things. The steeper the slope of the roof, the faster it gets rid of water. Even flat roofs have a bit of a pitch, usually a quarter inch for every four feet, so that they can drain water.

Roofs also have to stand up to other elements, such as wind. Along the coasts, four-sided hip roofs help roofs withstand hurricane-force winds. There are also architectural roofs, such as the Mansard roof or the gambrel roof, which allow for more headroom on a second story.

### ROOF VOCABULARY

What's just a roof to me and you is actually a structure



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### REAL ESTATE 101

#### Ice Dams

Ice dams occur on roofs when the heat in the attic melts snow on a home's roof. The water runs down and refreezes when it hits the colder overhangs. If water from additional snow melt backs up behind the ice dam, it can leech under the shingles and leak.

made of many interconnected parts. The roof sits on trusses or jack rafters, and where the sides of the roof meet at the peak is called the ridge. The bottom of the roof is called the eave and the sloping edges are rakes. Where two roof planes meet at an inside corner is a valley and the outside corner is a hip.

#### COMMON PROBLEMS

Leaks can form anywhere

on the roof, but they're more common in valleys, eaves and where roofs meet walls, chimneys or plumbing vents. Properly installed flashing — usually made of a metal material such as aluminum, copper or zinc — can stop leaks and last the lifetime of the roof.

Discoloration is another common problem, usually due to moss, algae or mildew growth. Once again, flashing is the answer. Zinc flashing

helps the most; as the zinc leaches out of the metal, it kills the creepy crawlies growing on and discoloring the roof.

Toward the end of its useful life, you'll notice curling shingles and shingles losing their mineral surface. Both are signs that you should plan for a new roof soon.

#### ROOFING MATERIALS

Roofs come almost as many

materials as there are shapes. The most common roof in the U.S. is made of asphalt shingles. Architectural asphalt shingles are built up and shaped to look like octagon scales or hand-staved shakes. Metal roofing comes in a variety of colors and materials. Metal roofs may be installed as part of an energy efficiency plan because they reflect solar radiation better than asphalt shingles. Slate roofs and cedar shingles are two traditional roofing materials that are still used today, as well as the barrel-tile roof on Spanish or Mediterranean construction.

Flat roofs require asphalt sheets or cloths to cover them. Remember that the fewer joints there are on a flat roof, the fewer leaks you're likely to develop. You can also cover a flat roof with a rubber membrane or EPDM roofing, which is bonded with mechanical fasteners and glue. Some roofing professionals may prefer a hot-tar roof that is layered on, or liquid-applied fiberglass or acrylic roofs.

#### LIFESPAN

How long your roof lasts depends on the type. Flat roofs will last 15-20 years, perhaps less in warm, wet climates; asphalt or cedar shingles will last 25 years; and some metal or slate roofs can last up to 50 years.



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### ROOF VOCABULARY

What's just a roof to me and you is actually a structure made of many interconnected parts. The roof sits on trusses or jack rafters, and where the sides of the roof meet at the peak is called the ridge. The bottom of the roof is called

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### HOMEWISE GLOSSARY

**Seller financing or seller take-back:** When the seller receives only a portion of the sales price at closing, and the balance he finances to the buyer in the form of a promissory note secured by the real estate purchased. **SOURCE:** MLS.com

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