

Homeowners Tips — Maintaining Roofs and Gutters

Annual inspections and preventative maintenance of roofs and gutters can help identify problems that need to be fixed while extending the life of your roof.

Here is some helpful advise that should help you avoid some common problems.

Got Trees?

Trees lose their leaves, and this debris, as well as other types of debris, can cause a roof to deteriorate by

- Promoting moisture. This encourages the growth of algae, fungus or moss.
- Preventing the water from draining properly. This causes water to backup under the shingles thereby causing a leak.
- Damming gutters and drains. This also causes water to back up under the shingles. Trees that are near the home or that have branches that overhang the roof can cause damage by rubbing against the shingles and gutters.

To prevent these problems, we suggest the following:

- Remove debris from your roof
- Clean out gutters, downspouts and drains
- Cut tree branches away from the roof gutters and drains

Roof

There are many visual clues on a roof that can help point to problem areas. Check the roof for

- Missing, damaged, or improperly aligned shingles. Repair or replace these shingles.
- Exposed or raised nails. As a general rule no nail heads should be showing on any roof unless they are caulked or sealed.
- Dried out, cracked or missing caulk or roofing cement. Remove old material and replace with new caulk or roofing cement.
- Damaged or water-stained fascia. Determine what is causing the staining. Repair or replace the fascia. Installing edge metal at the bottom of the roof may solve the problem.
- Missing, improperly installed or damaged flashing. Flashing should be around all penetrations and low spots on the roof. Flashing helps direct water away from roof penetrations and low spots.

- Penetrations can include vents, fireplaces, skylights, antennas, satellite dishes, heater pipes, air conditioning ducts, dormers, turbines, cable or tie-off hooks, etc. If the flashing is damaged or missing, have the flashing repaired or replaced.
- Overall shingle (roofing material) deterioration. It may be time to replace your roof. Consult a licensed, bonded and insured roofing contractor.

Roofs can be dangerous. If you are planning on doing the inspections and/or maintenance yourself, make sure you stay safe by having the proper equipment and by watching your step. In addition to the proper equipment make sure you have

- A sturdy ladder that is tall enough to access your roof safely
- Shoes with good traction
- A work partner/spotter
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If you are planning on having someone else inspect and repair your roof, make sure they are an experienced roofing contractor that is licensed, bonded and insured. You can check with the Contractors State Licensing Board at www.cslb.ca.gov for an individual contractor's status. All you need is the contractor's license number or the name of the firm.