

Roofs Aren't Over Your Head

A guide on how to maintain your church's roof.



You are not 'In over Your Head' when it comes to maintaining your church's roof. If you put a plan in place to have professionals periodically inspect (and repair-if needed) your roof, and do some inspections of your own, you can make great headway in preventing wind or water damage to the building and its contents.

Prior to Winter freezes (the Fall) and Spring storms, it is always a great time to inspect your roof to ensure that the building remains watertight. It is recommended that the roof be inspected professionally at least twice a year and after any extreme weather event (like a hailstorm). Like any

part of a building, the roof can be damaged or just subject to deterioration due to the elements or wear and tear. These factors all increase the risk of weather-related damage to your building and the valuable items inside.

Professional inspections of the roof are recommended at least twice a year and church staff inspections are recommended on a routine basis (at least once a month). Staff inspections are not as complicated as it may seem. Taking a walk around the building, at a distance or angle where you can see the roof from the ground, can be enough to detect damage. It may be beneficial to use binoculars to get an even better look. By completing routine roof inspections, you will be able to detect and arrange for repairs to little problems before they become big problems.

The roofing professional should provide a report that evaluates the current condition of the roof and any needed repairs. The inspection should review the covering/membrane, the flashing, seams, eaves and downspouts. If any damage is discovered, immediate action should be taken to repair/replace the damage before water can penetrate and damage the roof structure or interior. Any repairs or roof replacements should be completed by a professional roofer. The roofer should be required by contract to provide commercial general liability and workers' compensation insurance.

Any contract with a roofing professional should also include a release of liability for the church and indemnification (protection) for the church for the contractor's operations. The contract should require that the church be listed as an "Additional Insured" on their insurance policy. The contract should also state that the contractor will defend against and hold the church harmless for any claims. The contractor should provide a Certificate of Insurance and demonstrate the financial means to meet the contractual requirements.

The following items should also be included in any professional roofing inspection:

- Examine the underside of the roof deck (if possible) and the outside of the building for cracks, stains, rusting, watermarks, wet spots, chipped mortar or other damage
- Identify any debris to be removed

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- Check to be sure that areas with louvers, ridge vents, roof vents and soffit vents are clear
- Check for cracked and worn rubber boots around vent pipes
- Check a chimney cap for any damage
- Inspect all caulking and flashing
- Check the flashing around roof drains and vents

(for deterioration) and check for damage to capping at parapets and expansion joints

- For pitched or sloped roofs check for: granular erosion on asphalt shingles, deformed edges, curled or missing shingles, missing or loose tabs, loose/slipped or missing slates/roof tiles, growth of moss and lichen which could signal the underside of the roof is decaying
- For flat roofs check for: surface condition of the roof for punctures/blistering/granular loss/cracking or shrinkage, seams for open joints, ridging or the opening of lapped edges, areas where adhesion is lacking or deteriorating on a fully-adhered roofing systems, ensure that no fasteners are popping out on a fastened roofing system, the weight and depth of the stone is adequate per the specifications in an unanchored roofing system (Ballasted Roofing System), accumulation or ponding of water in certain areas (caused by an insufficient slope to roof drains, building settlement or even structural movement)



In addition to the semi-annual professional roof inspection, the following tasks should be routinely performed at the church:

- Trim overhanging tree branches to prevent leaves, small branches and other debris falling on the roof or trapping water on the roof or in the downspouts
- Make sure gutters and downspouts are clean and working while being securely anchored to the building
- Check to make sure that the roof space/attic is ventilated adequately throughout the year which ensures that heat and moisture do not build up in the attic causing mold or rot, this will also prevent water that has accumulated at the bottom of the roof from freezing and causing ice dams (causing further damage to your building), improper ventilation of attic space can also result in curling/blistering/ buckling and a reduced life span for asphalt shingles

Preventive maintenance and repairs can extend the life of your roof and prevent water damage to your building and its contents. Engaging professionals routinely will bring you peace of mind in that process.

Please consult a licensed electrician, plumber, technician or other building maintenance professional for specific advice on protecting your property.

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