

# Toolbox Talks

## Roof Inspection & Maintenance

Quality initial installation of roof coverings, periodic inspection and a good maintenance program will extend the lifespan of a roof and keep repair costs to a minimum. A maintained roof stabilizes property value and may prevent property loss due to leaks. A leaking roof can result in damaged property and equipment, disruption of workflow, electrical and fire hazards and growth of mold or mildew that may cause employee or public health problems. Prolonged leakage may lead to damage that could contribute to or result in structural failure. Maintaining roof systems now will save money later.

### How to Inspect a Roof: (Outside)

1. Look for signs of damage such as splits, tears, punctures, missing shingles (torn or blown off). Shingle fragments on the ground are indicators of trouble.
2. Black streaks or visible vegetation are indicators of mold, algae or fungus. This is most commonly found on north facing and/or shaded roofs or areas of high humidity. Over time, this will decompose roofing material and lead to leaks. This can be managed by chemical cleaning and trimming of overhanging trees.
3. Pay attention to roof penetrations - pipes, vents, chimneys, HVAC units, antenna mounts, etc. Inspect for splits, tears, sagging, loose fitting and damaged or missing flashing, fasteners and trim.
4. On flat or built-up roofs and around roof edges, inspect roof drains, scuppers and gutter systems. In addition to being a common cause of leaks, blockages may result in too much standing water on the roof. This can add thousands of pounds of weight to the roof decking causing extra stress to the deck and roof system.
5. Make sure that the trees are trimmed back away from the roof. Windblown branches can gouge and scratch roofing materials. Falling branches can damage or puncture roof membrane materials as well as shingles. Falling leaves can clog gutters or roof drains causing water back-ups.



# Toolbox Talks

## How to Inspect a Roof: (Inside)

6. In addition to inspection of the roof, conditions inside the building can also identify roof problems. This may include water stains on ceilings or walls, sagging or bulging paint, walls or panels, dampness, mold, mildew or musty odor, and wet insulation. Look in the attic for stains or rot on the underside of the roof sheathing, trusses, or other structural components. One or all of these can be indicators of serious problems.



**Note:** Often, a basic roof inspection can be done from the ground. “On roof” inspections should only be done by persons that are trained and equipped to safely do so.

## What if I have a serious roof leak?

- Reduce liability due to accidents by ceasing operations or isolating the area from employees and the public.
- Relocate or cover equipment, furnishings, materials or supplies that might be damaged. Make temporary or emergency repairs.
- If the cause of the leak can be safely identified and corrected, do so.
- Note the date, time, location circumstances and weather conditions at the time of the leak.
- Gather file information on the roofs’ age, construction details, previous repairs, photos of leak and damage, and prior roof conditions, if available.
- Notify appropriate officials and your insurance representative. Temporary or emergency repairs may be covered by insurance.

