



What is Your Roof's Lifespan?

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We get the question all of the time, how do I know when I'll need a new roof? Of course, this is a difficult question to answer without any additional information. There are some rules of thumb for average lifespan of a roof and we can begin with these.

An average asphalt roof will last 15-18 years.

Average, of course, is the middle ground. There are many other factors that contribute to a longer or shorter life of a roof; things you can control and things you can't control that will affect the lifespan of your roof.

To know if you'll need a new roof, the first question anyone will ask is, "How old is your existing roof?" This isn't the end of the story, however, because a roof that's in fine shape should not be replaced, even if it's past the average lifespan. Also, if your roof is below that age and is showing significant signs of deterioration, your roofing contractor may still recommend a new roof to prevent more expensive repairs.

Here are a few of the most basic signs of needing a new roof. Not any one of them is conclusive by itself, but taking them all into account with the roof's age will help roofing professionals make their best recommendation for you.

1. Are the shingles curling or missing? Water and wind damage can cause shingles to curl or to break apart, removing your protection from the elements.
2. Are there significant granules of asphalt in your gutters? Shingles tend to lose granules faster toward the end of their life. This is why it's important to peek in your gutters more often than not.
3. Are roof valleys showing signs of leaks? Roof valleys channel all of the water and snow on your roof, therefore, it is important that they aren't compromised. They can be some of the early areas to fail, so keep a close eye.
4. Is flashing around chimneys and vents showing age? Flashing is used to protect areas where you have holes in your roof (vents, chimneys, etc), so naturally, these are prone to being an early failure point. Watch these from above, and below in your attic, for holes or leaks.

Walking through this assessment, along with your roof age, can help you and your roofing contractor make a sensible decision about a total roof replacement. There are a variety of factors that will affect how long your roof can last. We have divided them into factors you can control and factors you cannot control.

Factors You Can Control

- ▶ **Color of the roof** – dark roofs absorb more heat. More heat shortens a roof lifespan.
- ▶ **Maintenance** – Keeping your roof clear of debris and many other tips addressed elsewhere will help lengthen your roof's lifespan.
- ▶ **Installation** – Proper installation by nailing in the nail strip, using correct shingle types, and excellent ventilation, among many other variables, will contribute to a much longer lifespan. (This is where your roofing contractor choice plays a huge role.)
- ▶ **Roofing Material** – Roofing contractors select what type of material they will use for your roof. Ensure your contractor uses the best possible shingles and does not cut corners when selecting their materials.

Factors You Cannot Control

- ▶ **Roof slope** – This is something you aren't going to change unless you are drastically changing your house. Higher pitch roofs tend to last longer since water and debris runs off of them more easily.
- ▶ **Orientation of roof surface** – A roof that faces south receives more sunlight, leading to more heat and usually a bit shorter life.
- ▶ **Climate** – Areas that receive more direct sunlight will be subject to shorter roof lifespans than areas without. However, areas that get a lot of snow or high winds will also have a shorter lifespan than the average.

Understanding your current roof condition and age and all of the factors that can play a part in your roof lifespan will help you keep your roof in the best shape possible and know the best time to replace it. For some additional help, be sure to call the pros at Pro Home Improvement 888-776-1998.