Roofing shingles are something that most every homeowner has, but few spend enough time thinking about them. The purpose of roofing shingles are to provide a single layer solution to a leak proof top for a home or structure. Shingles are generally laid out from the bottom edge of the roof upward, with each higher row overlapping the lower row. Traditionally shingles were made of wood and were capped at the top with a row of copper or lead sheeting. In modern shingle roofs this has been replaced by a row of shingles with plastic underlay.

Back to the make up of shingles, wood was considered good. But in time modern materials such as asphalt and asbestos cement replaced wood as common materials. Fiberglass based asphalt shingles are now the most popular shingle used in the United States. The obvious issue with wood is fire, and fire is the reason wood and paper backed shingles are used infrequently in modern construction.

Most people have seen a type of wood shingle, but wouldn't be able to identify it. It's called a shake, which is a wooden shingle made from split logs. Shake roofs were common with log cabins, and with many wood frame homes. They're still in use today, most commonly transported by helicopters, but it wasn't always done that way. Before the invention of helicopters the shakes were tied into packs and transported by pack animal or even by human power. Often cut in hilly areas, they were carried down the slope with the help of a long line run from the bottom to the top. This line served as a hand hold so people carrying the shake packs wouldn't fall.

The main difference between a shingle and a tile is flexibility. Tiles are generally made from ceramic. They're brittle and ill suited to locations where tree limbs might fall on a roof. Shingles are flexible and therefor better able to stand up to tree limbs. Wood shingles rot, while ceramic tiles don't., but modern materials such as the asbestos base for most shingles don't rot. Another difference is the shape. Shingles are flat, while ceramic tiles commonly have an "S" profile to allow them to interlock for strength.

One of the more unique materials for roof shingles is slate. Because of both cleavage and grain slate can be easily split into thin sheets. Such sheets, the slate shingles, make for an old world look for a roof. Slate roofing shingles are installed by a slater, a tradesman trained to work with slate. The same qualities that make slate excellent for roofing shingles, they are fireproof and an electric insulator, made them useful for early 20th century switchboards and relay controls on large electric motors. Imagine that, making a phone call on your roofing shingles.

Big Green Roofing

Commercial & Residential

- Asphalt
- Metal
- Shakes
- Tile
- Slate

Facts About Residential Roofing

Residential Roofing

Residential roofing sounds like a boring topic. Except for roofing contractors or other residential roofing specialists, who would want to talk about residential roofing? How about home owners? The roof is one of the most important aspects of a home. So it's essential for homeowners to be up to date on the subject of residential roofing at least as far as it pertains to their own residence.

One of the most important points to consider when discussing residential roofing is the area where the residence is located. Roofing needs vary by region and include such considerations as need to withstand tree limbs, wind resistance, fire resistance, ability to withstand the weight of snow or to allow snow to slide off, and even color when it comes to a good looking roof for the area. Residential roofing needs are quite different in a northern, cold and snowy region than they would be in a hot and dry region.

Roof Maintenance

For those who purchase homes it's important to understand the features and maintenance needs of the roof. For those who build homes, particularly if they serve as their own general contractor, choosing the right roof for the region is a key.

Since it's more common for a homeowner to purchase a home complete with a pre-installed residential roofing system, let's examine some of the maintenance issues that are important to ensuring the best performance and longest life from the roofing system. First amongst these issues is timing. Proper maintenance should begin the second the roofing system is complete. Such maintenance will save money in the long run. Immediate maintenance includes inspecting the work and checking the contractor's license, insurance, and whether all aspects of the roofing system were installed to manufacturer's specifications or to local government guidelines.

After six months to a year the roof should be inspected for debris such as sticks, leaves, and even garbage such as aluminum cans, and those debris removed. This should continue at least once a year. Also make sure the gutters are cleaned at least once a year to ensure proper drainage. If the residential roof can't drain, it will develop leaks. Leaks cause a great deal of damage, including the possibility of mold that can completely destroy a home.

Pipe boot, the material at the bottom of vent and other pipes on the roof, often require replacing after only a few years. Many states require pipe jacks made out of lead, and this will last longer than the roof. But some states, including Oklahoma, don't require lead pipe jacks.

Many roofers convince home owners that the entire roof needs replacing even when there's only a tiny leak. That's nonsense. And the best way to avoid the scam is to have the roof inspected twice a year, once in the spring and once in the fall. An easy way to remember to have the residential roofing inspected is to do it when the clocks spring forward and fall back.