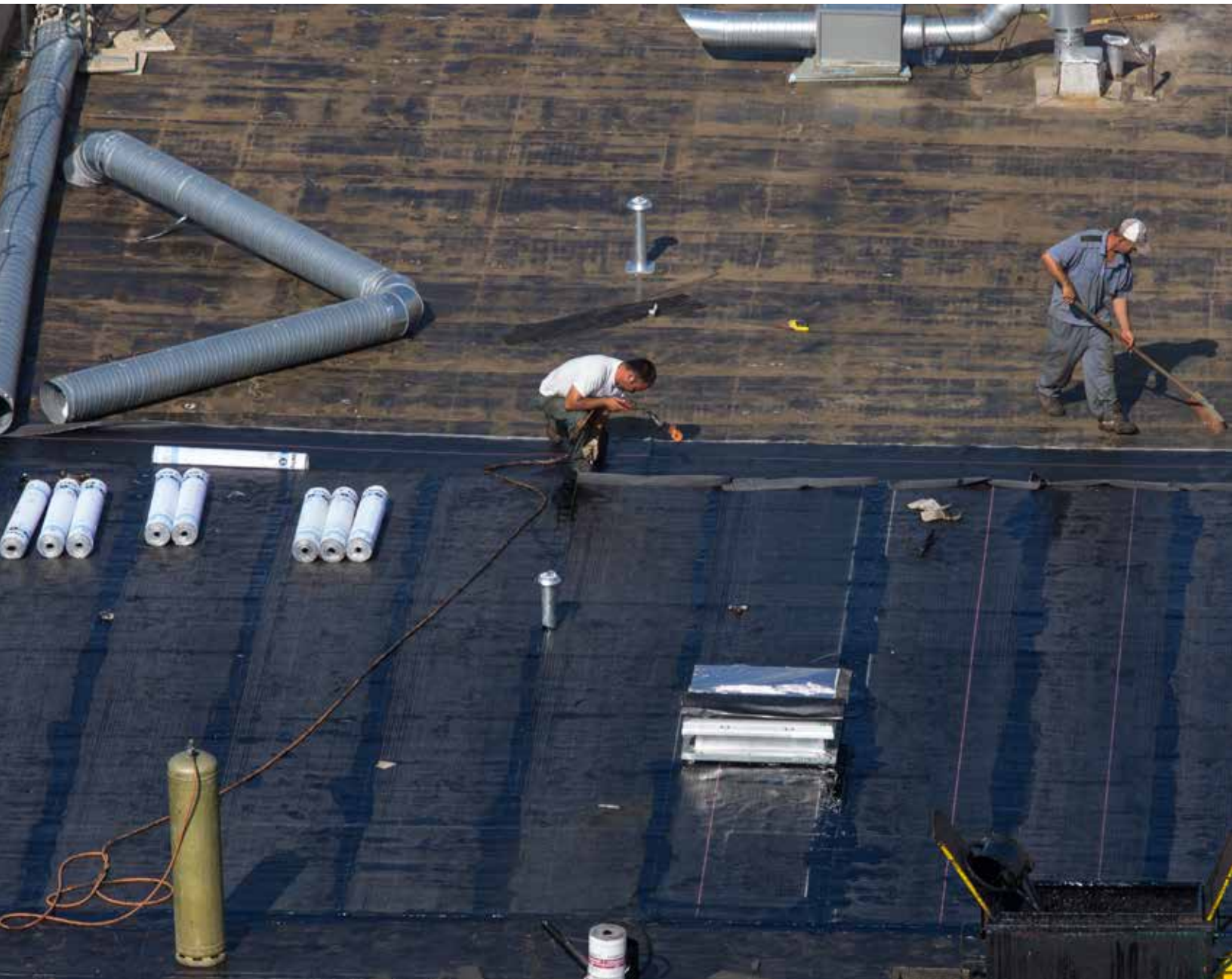
ROBERTS ROOFING
Commercial & Industrial Roofing Experts

THE COMMERCIAL BUILDING OWNER'S GUIDE TO

ROOF REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE





INTRODUCTION

With everything else a business owner has to worry about, it's easy to understand how annual maintenance of their commercial roof can fall by the wayside. However, the failure to find and correct minor roof defects and deterioration in their earliest stages is the greatest cause of roof damage—damage that could necessitate roof replacement far earlier than normal.

Professional roofing contractors, designers and manufacturers all agree that a yearly roof system inspection, including necessary wear and tear repairs, will prolong the life of your commercial or industrial building's roof. In fact, an annual maintenance and repair program can save your company thousands of dollars and greatly decrease the chance of devastating roof damage.

Roberts Roofing assembled this guide to help building owners understand what to expect from their professional roofing contractors when it comes to repairs and maintenance, and also to recognize early signs of damage.

This e-book includes:

Ch. 1 – Does My New Commercial Roof Need Maintenance?

Ch. 2 – Warning Signs of Commercial Roof Damage

Ch. 3 – What Should I Expect During Commercial Roof Maintenance?

Ch. 4 – Maintenance Agreements vs. Roof Warranties: Which Offers Greater Protection?

Ch. 5 – Managing Your Roof During Cold Weather Season

Ch. 6 – How to Prolong the Life of Your Commercial Roof



CHAPTER 1

DOES MY NEW COMMERCIAL ROOF NEED MAINTENANCE?

Congratulations—you're the proud owner of a new car. Along with the owner's manual, you receive a schedule for maintenance checks. As long as you follow that schedule, your car is covered for specific repairs within a given time period. Besides, you've invested a lot of money in the vehicle, so you also want to make sure it continues to run smoothly.

Just like an automobile, a new roof is a large capital expense. Think about it—you wouldn't spend $30,000 or more on an automobile and never return to the service department. To get the most value out of your commercial roof investment, you need to maintain it.

Most commercial roofs are designed as 15, 20 and, in some cases, 30-year roofs. These designations should not be interpreted to mean that the roof will not require maintenance for the stated period. Manufacturer warranties require periodic maintenance with repairs, at the owner's expense, to maintain the warranty. Maintenance and periodic roof inspections will also increase the life expectancy of the roof system beyond the warranty period.

Roofs that are not maintained will, in all probability, require replacement at or before the end of the stated period, while those that are maintained properly can be expected to serve well beyond. Regular roof inspections also can prevent costly problems from causes that are not covered by manufacturers' guarantees, such as damage from vandalism, damage caused by other contractors on the roof or even structural deterioration.



BIANNUAL INSPECTIONS

All commercial roofs, including new roofs, should be inspected every six months to help ensure early detection of a problem. There are many external factors beyond your control that can contribute to damage—think in terms of severe weather, heavy foot traffic and accumulated debris from the surrounding area. Your contractor should look for signs of potential leaks, defects and threats from surrounding trees or other equipment and anything else that inhibits adequate drainage.

REGULAR MAINTENANCE EXTENDS LIFE OF COMMERCIAL BUILDING

An educational center had its facility completely reroofed over a 20-year period. The customer had Roberts Roofing perform inspections with maintenance on the entire facility every year since the first roof was completed. Minor repairs are done yearly, and many potentially damaging problems have been repaired before causing major issues.

As of our last inspection of the facility in June 2016, roof sections that were installed 22 years ago with a manufacturer's warranty are still performing well, and we do not anticipate a need for replacement for at least 10 more years, if not longer. The yearly program has worked very well for the center and has saved it a great deal of money over the years. This has allowed the center to budget for much needed projects in its community instead of spending those funds on reroofing.



KNOW YOUR WARRANTY

Get your manufacturer warranty in writing and be sure you understand what the warranty covers when your new roof is installed. Just as you would with your automobile, keep a careful record of all your inspections and any repairs made—you'll be glad you did in the long run.

Careful maintenance of your new commercial roof will identify issues before they become major problems. While you may incur some short-term costs to maintain your roof, investing in ongoing maintenance now will provide significant cost savings and add years to the life of your new roof. By conducting maintenance at regular intervals, you can have confidence that you are protecting all of your valuable assets inside the building.

REPAIR RATHER THAN REPLACE

Regular inspections and maintenance of your new roof will, in many cases, isolate specific problems that only need a repair. Why take the chance of letting something develop into a bigger problem that necessitates the need for a total roof replacement?

Roberts Roofing Company strongly recommends at least yearly maintenance for your new commercial roof system as well as preventive maintenance for your existing commercial roof system. Better yet—once in the fall and once in the spring is a good rule of thumb for prolonging the life of your roof!



CHAPTER 2

WARNING SIGNS OF COMMERCIAL ROOFING DAMAGE

It is always recommended that Northeast Ohio commercial building owners proactively look for signs of damage on their commercial roofs. By spotting a problem early, you could avoid spending thousands of dollars on major roof repair or replacement.

Here are five warning signs that might signal a need to call in a professional roofing contractor to inspect your roof:

1) DAMAGED FLAT ROOF FLASHING

Note the metal strips that run along the edges of your roof. Their purpose is to secure your roofing materials and prevent water or any other debris from compromising your system. Is your flashing bent, rusting or otherwise damaged? If your roof flashing is not well-sealed, there is a good chance that water can seep into your commercial roof system. By addressing this problem as soon as possible, you can either prevent or keep water damage to a minimum.



2) CRACKED OR BLISTERED COMMERCIAL ROOF SURFACE

Check for any cracking, bubbles or blisters on your roof surface; this could be a sign of trapped moisture, and that can lead to leaking. Blistering occurs when there are pockets of air or moisture trapped between the roof membrane and deck or between layers of the membrane itself. It's not a good idea to ignore because the blisters will worsen and lead to more serious problems.

3) COMMERCIAL ROOF LEAKS

Especially during foul-weather season, it's a good time to check for ponding or standing water. While it's normal to have some standing water after a storm, that water should drain or evaporate within 48-72 hours. If not, it can lead to major leaks and cause premature aging of your flat roof.

4) INTERIOR WATER STAINS

Sometimes you can detect problems within your building. If you notice a water stain on the ceiling or walls of an upper floor, it's time to investigate the possibility of damage to your roofing system.

5) MOLD/ODORS

Another red flag that you might spot inside your commercial building is mold or foul odors. This could result from water breaching your roofing system, or perhaps the exterior of your building. Be sure to have a professional roofing inspector look for any problematic areas.

Remember, small problems can indicate much larger problems. It's better to catch them early when they can be addressed by a relatively simple repair. You should be able to count on your professional roofing contractor to perform year-round emergency commercial roof repair—even during or after inclement weather. For example, Roberts Roofing has many clients who utilize our repair crews and have us inspect their roofs after severe storms or catastrophes, such as fire or other calamities.



CHAPTER 3

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT DURING COMMERCIAL ROOF MAINTENANCE?

Let's go back to the car analogy from Chapter 1. Just like a car, there are various aspects of roof maintenance that are necessary to extending the life and quality of your commercial roofing system. Knowing what to expect from your professional roofing contractor will help ensure your roof is inspected for the signs of damage we mentioned in Chapter 2.

When Roberts Roofing Company performs a seasonal commercial roof maintenance on a built-up asphalt commercial roof system, we first make a visual inspection to identify any areas that look problematic. This includes the inside of your building where large or multiple ceiling stains can indicate a serious problem. Roofs with gutters will need to be cleared of all debris. In some cases, we need to further inspect a problem area using special instrumentation.

Further, we regularly conduct the following actions:

- Soil stack leads, HVAC penetrations and skylights will be inspected for cuts or holes and resealed where required with appropriate materials.
- Sealant voids in termination bars, counter-flashings and parapet caps will be touched up as required.
- Tears, splits and breaks in the perimeter and internal membrane flashing systems and flashing strip-ins will be repaired with appropriate repair materials.
- Visible membrane defects, which may allow water into the roofing system, will be repaired with the appropriate repair materials.
- Drain bolts and clamping rings will be checked and re-secured as needed.
- Strip-ins around drain leads and gutter flashings will be checked and coated with approved mastics if required.
- Gutter downspouts will be checked to ensure they are secure and free of any debris.

Given the freeze-thaw cycles we experience in Northeast Ohio, there are specific signs of damage we look for during the spring inspection. They include:

- Loose seams, including edges and corners
- Damaged fasteners
- Bubbles in the membrane; punctured membranes; or those split from freeze/thaw cycles
- Loose flashing or seals around vents or drains
- Soft or spongey spots in the roof field
- Clogged or damaged drains and gutters
- Signs of mold or algae

A word about recordkeeping: You and the commercial roofing contractor should keep records and full documentation of all maintenance that has been performed. Why is this important? If there is a warranty claim, the material manufacturer will contact the roofing company that installed the roof to see if regular annual maintenance has been performed—just like a mechanic would check to see if the oil has been changed if a car was having engine problems.



CHAPTER 4

MAINTENANCE AGREEMENTS VS. ROOF WARRANTIES: WHICH OFFERS GREATER PROTECTION?

Many building owners are unsure about who they should contact should a problem arise. For example, let's say you have a leak. You know you are only part of the way through your warranty. Do you call the manufacturer or your commercial roofer?

First, a bit of background. When Roberts Roofing issues a warranty, it comes directly from the manufacturer. Here's how it works: When a new roof is installed, the manufacturer sends a representative out to the site to conduct a full inspection. If anything needs to be adjusted, the professional roofing contractor does it at that time. Your repairs should be made at no cost to you. The only exception would be damage due to outside forces, such as a tree limb puncturing a membrane, or damage caused by an HVAC crew. Still, your roofer can make the repairs.



MAINTENANCE AGREEMENTS

If you buy a new car that has a three-year / 36,000-mile warranty, but you never change the oil or have the car inspected, would you still expect the automobile manufacturer to honor the warranty? Not a chance. The same holds true with commercial roofs. It's not a matter of warranty versus maintenance after all. Manufacturer warranties require periodic maintenance with repairs to maintain the warranty. If the manufacturer receives a call about a problem with the roof, their first call will be to your commercial roofer to find out if your company has been conducting regular maintenance.

Learn More About Our No-Obligation Roof Inspection

KNOW YOUR WARRANTY; TRACK YOUR MAINTENANCE

Commercial roof warranties vary anywhere from one to 30-plus years—it all depends on the new roofing system being applied. For example, a common roof system applied by the Roberts Roofing professionals is the GAF single-ply .060 TPO roof system. This system is applied with specific materials from the GAF Corporation and can only be installed by GAF-certified professionals to qualify for the warranty.

The roof spec guarantees a complete, no-dollar-limit manufacturer's warranty for 20 years. This spec can be modified by swapping out certain materials for thicker materials as well as different fastening requirements to achieve a warranty of 30 years.

It's always smart to have a written copy of your manufacturer's warranty and to understand what it covers. As we addressed in the previous chapter, you will want to keep track of your inspections and any repairs that are made. At Roberts Roofing, we keep our customers' maintenance records on file at all times. We keep track of any repairs that need to be made over the course of your warranty.

LACK OF MAINTENANCE LEADS TO COSTLY RESULTS

Recently, a building owner called Roberts Roofing after noticing minor leaks and mold on interior walls. Since the roof was installed 10 years ago, the customer felt a repair was all that was needed. However, the roof had never been inspected after completion, and several matters had compromised the roof system:

- Leaves and debris from surrounding trees had clogged one of the roof drains and caused damaging ponding.
- Storms had caused tree branches to break open the perimeter wall flashings, resulting in the mold.
- An HVAC company installed a new unit without calling a professional roofer. The seal was inadequate, causing damage to the roof and insulation.

These three issues caused a situation where a repair quote turned into a major roof replacement costing the owner tens of thousands of dollars more than he expected and robbing him of 10 additional years of performance from his original roof installation. If inspection with maintenance had been performed annually for several hundreds of dollars per visit, he could have saved tens of thousands of dollars.

DON'T SWEAT IT: CONSIDER AN ANNUAL COMMERCIAL ROOF MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT

When you have an annual commercial roof maintenance agreement from your professional roofer, you don't have to worry about remembering to call for your inspections—that responsibility falls entirely on us. We'll schedule the inspections ahead of time, always letting you know when the inspections will take place at your convenience. Regularly scheduled maintenance will catch any unexpected issues and address them immediately. Here's how they work:

- All comprehensive maintenance contracts are designed for warranted and non-warranted roofing systems for a set fee.
- A comprehensive maintenance contract can be combined with leak repair credit for an all-inclusive roof solution.
- Every roof system should be protected by a maintenance contract as manufacturers' warranties do not always cover all roof issues that may arise.

Not only is a yearly preventive maintenance and repair program important, but the contractor you choose to work with is also paramount to the life expectancy of your roof. For example, Roberts Roofing Company has maintenance crews that hold up-to-date certification in roofing repair technique and training.



CHAPTER 5

MANAGING YOUR ROOF DURING COLD WEATHER SEASON

No guide on commercial roof repair and maintenance would be complete without addressing Northeast Ohio winters and the havoc they can wreak on commercial roofs. Northeast Ohio winters can be hard on any commercial roof, no matter what shape it is in. For example, constant freeze/thaw cycles can lead to trapped moisture in seams that can eventually cause leaks. When drifting snow melts, it can create great pressure on the roof.

Overall, flat roofs are more susceptible to leaks because they don't allow snow to easily slide off. Additionally, ice can be a real problem on flashings, seams and downspouts. So, what do you do when you spot signs that your roof is leaking this winter?

The good news is that there are ways to temporarily address problems like these so that they don't lead to more costly repairs come spring. While access is obviously limited in the winter, there are a few quick fixes Roberts Roofing Company recommends to address winter leaks to buy you some time before your commercial roofer can provide a more permanent solution.



1) MANUAL SNOW REMOVAL

This might sound like a no-brainer, but let's face it—the more you let snow build up on your roof, the more susceptible your building will be to the problems we have identified above. Roberts Roofing is experienced in moving or removing snow from a problem area until a long-term solution is possible.

2) TARPS

It's a good idea to have large tarps on hand in case a problem arises when winter weather is too harsh for your commercial roofing contractor to make an immediate repair. Tarps can be applied inside the facility to protect valuable and expensive equipment and furniture. If possible, tarps can be secured to rafters or other structural supports to divert leaking water to a better location.

3) TEMPORARY MATERIALS

Your professional roofer should be able to put down a temporary material that will stall or temporarily stop an active winter leak. The professionals at Roberts Roofing most commonly apply a variety of temporary materials that can slow or even stop a leak until we can apply a more permanent solution.

When our customers discover leaks during winter months, Roberts Roofing dispatches a professional to determine the best course of action for your particular issue.



CHAPTER 6

HOW TO PROLONG THE LIFE OF YOUR COMMERCIAL ROOF

The quality of materials and workmanship that go into a new commercial roof will go a long way in providing the performance business owners want to get from such a large capital expense. Still, as the information in the previous five chapters suggests, there are many other factors that determine the actual life of your commercial roof, such as regular inspections, quality repairs, hiring the right professional roofing contractor—and even the weather.

If a roof is expected to last at least 20 years, but requires substantial repairs in its last several years, the life cycle costs increase. By investing in regular roof inspections, you are able to take control of the life expectancy. Here are a few additional tips we recommend:

1) DON'T PROCRASTINATE ON REPAIRS

There really is never a good time to spend extra money on making repairs—we get that. However, a small pool of water today can become an emergency tomorrow when the roof collapses.



2) HONOR THY WARRANTY

Take the time to understand everything in your warranty. Review it with your roofing contractor to make sure you understand what is and is not included and for how long. Finally, be aware that you can void your contracts if you don't keep up with required inspections.

3) PROTECT THE ROOF SURFACE

You may have any number of contractors accessing your roof to install or provide maintenance to HVAC units, install satellite dishes and provide electrical services. If you provide walkways, railings and padding, you can keep workers away from sensitive areas where heavy foot traffic can cause damage.

4) LET WATER FLOW

Make sure there is adequate water runoff by clearing gutters, downspouts and drains.

5) REPORT STORM DAMAGE

If you suspect damage from severe weather conditions, call your roofing contractor immediately. The good news is that there are ways to temporarily address these problems so that they don't lead to more costly repairs.

CONCLUSION

We hope this e-book has been helpful in addressing the proactive steps you can take to extend the life of your commercial roof. And while every building owner hopes that their new commercial roof will last for decades to come, external factors can sometimes cause damage, especially when the roof hasn't been properly maintained or when the wrong system was selected for that particular roof.

For more information about commercial roof replacement, repair or maintenance, just give us a call at 440.946.2233 or email info@robertsroofing.com.

Roberts Roofing Company has been a leading provider of innovative commercial and industrial roofing solutions in Cleveland, Ohio since 1981. We serve companies of all sizes in Cleveland and the surrounding region with full-service commercial roofing services, offering a combination of technical expertise, custom solutions and quality workmanship to every project. Our team consists of nearly 40 fully trained roofing professionals.

