

# Roof Maintenance Saves Valuable Dollars

*Extend the Life of Your Roof Investment and Maximize ROI*

Maintaining roofs properly requires commitment and expertise. For building owners and facility managers of commercial, retail, or condominium properties, an “out of sight, out of mind” attitude toward roofing systems is dangerous. Too many owners and managers have been burned by premature roof failure. Twice-a-year inspections and routine maintenance should not be deferred, even if funding is tight. When water starts entering the building, hard assets, profits, and reputations can take a beating.

## **How Roof Maintenance Maximizes ROI**

Roof maintenance pays. Many in the industry estimate that for every \$1 spent on a comprehensive roof maintenance program, \$5 is saved through reduced emergency repairs, interior damage, energy conservation, and extended roof life. A twice-yearly inspection by your roofing manufacturer’s certified roofing professional will minimize the need for emergency repairs, reduce damage to the building structure and finishes, and help maintain a safe and healthy working environment for building occupants.

The benchmark today for most roofing systems is 20 years. With bottom-line profitability so important, a proactive roof maintenance program is a key ingredient in the long-term performance of any roof. While few people would purchase a new car and not change the oil to protect their major investment, unfortunately once an investment is made in a roof system, the roof is out of sight, and likely “out of mind” until there is a problem. By then, damage may be extensive.

The most important reason for establishing a proactive roof inspection program is to protect the capital investment of the roof. Proper roof maintenance not only add years to the life of a roof, it also uncovers problems before a water leak wets insulation, creates mold, and damages the interior of the building. To be effective, roof maintenance programs require ongoing commitment, particularly if the roof has been neglected in the past. But as the program develops, and roofs are brought up to standards, facility executives will find that their total roofing costs will decline.

## **Don’t Be Blindsided: Know Your Warranty**

What is one of the most important tools building owners and managers can use to protect their roofing investment? Information. Know what type of warranty you have, its terms and when it expires. While there are different warranties, the long-term NDL (no dollar limit) warranties that most building owners desire (10 years +) are from roofing manufacturers. While any roofer can put on that manufacturer’s roofing system, in order to get an NDL warranty, your roofing professional must be a certified applicator of that roofing manufacturer. Once the roof is installed, these warranties



1425 Chase Avenue  
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007  
Telephone: 847-952-3600  
Fax: 847-952-3606

## Roof Maintenance Saves Valuable Dollars

*Extend the Life of Your Roof Investment and Maximize ROI*

contractually require semi-annual roof inspections by the certified roofing professional to maintain the terms of your extended warranty. It's similar to owning a car that's still under warranty and having a local mechanic put a non-branded part in the vehicle. Your warranty is now void because you had work done by someone other than a factory-approved dealer.

### The Roofing Contractor Is Key

While the choice of roofing system is important, selecting an experienced roofing contractor is critical to the success of any new or reroofing project. There are literally thousands of substandard, unqualified contractors out there who might not be in business long. [According to the U.S. Census Bureau](#), in just a three-year period, 45% of all roofing contractors were new while 41% of existing contractors had gone out of business. It is also critical to know your state licensing laws. In the state of Illinois for example, a roofer can have either an unlimited license, or a limited license. A limited license means that a roofer can only work on residential buildings of 8 units or less, and not on commercial buildings at all. When owners or property managers use an improperly licensed roofing contractor on their buildings, they are exposed to various legal issues.

For stability and longevity, it is best to work with a provider that has been in business for at least 10 years. The company should also be licensed, bonded, and insured. Look for experienced contractors like Chicago-based A-1 Roofing Company, family owned since 1910. They are certified by most roofing manufacturers and can offer roofing manufacturers' long-term NDL (no dollar limit) warranties.

### Be Proactive, Not Reactive

There's an old saying heard often in the roofing industry: A roof accounts for only 10% of the total cost of constructing a building, but 90% of its problems down the road. If this is true, choosing a roofing provider that offers repair and restoration options, not just replacements, improves the likelihood of an accurate analysis and a successful plan for your roof and budget, beginning with these inspections:

#### Initial Inspection

Performed when the building is first turned over to the owner or immediately following re-roofing. It verifies that the roof and any equipment installed on the roof have been properly installed, and that equipment is installed so that its operation will not damage the roof. It also records the location of any other roof penetrations and ensures that the roof is properly sealed around the penetrations.

#### Bi-Annual Inspections

Spring and fall roof inspections are optimal timing. The fall inspection identifies defects that may



1425 Chase Avenue  
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007  
Telephone: 847-952-3600  
Fax: 847-952-3606

## Roof Maintenance Saves Valuable Dollars

*Extend the Life of Your Roof Investment and Maximize ROI*

have formed over the summer when the roof was exposed to high thermal stresses and ultraviolet light. The spring inspection looks for problems that may have been caused by ice or snow accumulation.

### Damage Inspections

Damage inspections are performed immediately following windstorms or hail storms. Damage inspections should also be performed whenever a change is made to the equipment installed on the roof. If the roof is under warranty and emergency repairs are required after severe weather, contact the roofing manufacturer warrantor and the approved roofing professional as soon as possible.

### Bi-annual Inspections Extend Roof Life

The [National Roofing Contractors Association \(NRCA\)](#) consumer advisory bulletin recommends two inspections a year and regular maintenance as the keys to long-term roof performance. The NRCA believes that the best way to ensure satisfactory post-installation roof performance is to have a formal long-term maintenance agreement with an experienced, manufacturer-certified roofing contractor.

### How to Keep Your Roof Leak Free

Don't make emergency spending for roof repairs a habit. Use your budget wisely and perform inspections and preventative repairs to avoid big expenditures. Preventative maintenance programs aim to discover problems before they cause failures so you can fix them early for the best possible results.

Your certified roofing professional should:

1. Inspect drains and downspouts to make sure they are clear of blockage.
2. Check penetrations and flashings for any gaps or tears.
3. Inspect rooftop vents and equipment to make sure they are well sealed.
4. Look for any signs of damage to the roof and recommend solutions.
5. Fix roofs with materials that match what was installed originally, not just what will stop the leak.

The biggest thing that causes a roof to fail is damage. It's almost never material failures. One of the most common causes of damage is people walking on the roof, which can cause cuts and punctures of the membrane. Even with regular inspections and repairs, water can penetrate the membrane, damaging the insulation and possibly interior surfaces. High winds can damage the roof system by



1425 Chase Avenue  
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007  
Telephone: 847-952-3600  
Fax: 847-952-3606

## Roof Maintenance Saves Valuable Dollars

*Extend the Life of Your Roof Investment and Maximize ROI*

causing it to come loose from the building. You also get damage from storms and ponded water, which can accelerate the breakdown of some roofing materials. Something as simple as a dropped tool can damage the roof. And then there's the case of a Chicago commercial building that sustained a major roof leak caused by a screen door that fell off a neighboring high-rise during a torrential rainstorm. The damage happened at night; no one saw it and the water poured in.

### Weighing Dollars Versus Value

Focus on the lowest *roof lifecycle cost*. Owners and facilities managers who react to problems as they occur [pay an average of 25¢ per square foot](#) annually for maintenance. Owners and facility managers who inspect and repair proactively – before problems happen – spend an average of only 14¢ per square foot annually. Proactively maintained roofs last an average of 20 years compared to a lifespan of 10 years or less for reactive maintenance.

A roof undergoes serious wear and tear throughout its lifetime, with weathering and degeneration taking their toll. For example, a lot of high-rises have concrete walls that constantly crack. With hairline cracks in the concrete, water gets into the concrete and then into the roof system, leading to premature failure. Water may not show up inside the building, but it is damaging the roof. For a modified bitumen membrane roof, it's not unusual for seams to come apart eight to nine years down the road. When there's a leak on a modified bitumen roof, many roofers use roof cement on the open seam or the hole in the roof. If it's early on in the life of the roof, it means the leak was fixed with a 3-5 year product on a roof that should last 20 years. To keep your costs in check and protect your investment, roofs should be fixed with the materials that match what was installed originally, not just what it's going to take to stop the leak.

Certified roofing contractors like A-1 Roofing Company will look at more than just the roof during inspections. They look at masonry walls, because when masonry starts to deteriorate, it lets water into the roof. They also look at ductwork insulation, which may cause water to get into the roofing system.

### Technology Is Your Best Tool

A roofing provider that has made an investment in technology can help take the guesswork out of your roof repair and maintenance decisions. A-1 Roofing Company does everything on tablets, allowing them to provide before and after photos of everything they do, which is then plotted on a roof plan, and given to the owner or facility manager. Invoices include all the before and after pictures, as well as the roof plan showing exactly where the work was done.

Through the A-1 Roofing Company website, a client can log in through the client portal and see the proposal, all the pictures, their roof plan, invoices, and inspection reports. Online software such as



1425 Chase Avenue  
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007  
Telephone: 847-952-3600  
Fax: 847-952-3606

## Roof Maintenance Saves Valuable Dollars

*Extend the Life of Your Roof Investment and Maximize ROI*

this can help you manage roof assets easily through a variety of tracking and reporting options. These options include roof asset management, in-depth reporting, invoice tracking, and data tracking, all of which help you to more accurately determine your roof's lifespan and avoid unexpected costs associated with emergency repairs.

### When Do You Know It's Time to Re-roof?

Utilizing visual examination and core samples, your roofing provider can analyze the current condition of your roof and recommend if roof repair or restoration is an option, or whether roof replacement is necessary. Choosing a roofing provider that offers repair and restoration options, not just replacements, improves the likelihood of an accurate analysis and a successful plan for your roof and your budget.

A good rule of thumb is to consider repairing your roof if it will survive its original service life expectancy without exceeding the cost of a new roof. A-1 Roofing Company inspection reports state the anticipated roof replacement year to keep it top of mind. They also start working with clients three to four years before the roof is ready to be replaced, helping them set budgets to build their reserves so they are not blindsided.

### Be Prepared: Know Your State's Energy Codes

It is important to meet energy code requirements during roof retrofits. [Building energy conservation codes will save U.S. home and business owners an estimated \\$126 billion](#) and 841 million metric tons of avoided carbon dioxide emissions through 2040. However, for owners of older buildings with little or no insulation, when it's time to re-roof, the price can be a great shock. Because of the energy codes they could be adding about \$4 per square foot for the insulation; you have to raise rooftop units and you have to raise plumbing vents to accommodate the insulation.

Education and strategic budget planning are the best defense for managing a building. Understanding roofing costs can be difficult, but when you know what to look for and are armed with the right questions, it is much easier to make the right choice for your needs and save time and money in the end.



1425 Chase Avenue  
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007  
Telephone: 847-952-3600  
Fax: 847-952-3606