



Selling Roof Maintenance to Homeowners

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“Thank you for calling XYZ Roofing, how may we help you today?”

“There is water coming into my house from under my soffits, can you please send someone out to look at this and fix it for me?!”

Have you taken one of those phone calls before? Or how about this one—“I woke up this morning to find water on my bathroom floor/fireplace ledge/kitchen countertop . . .”?

These are all symptoms of a nagging and persistent problem—neglect. This is neglect of the common failure points of a shingle roof. Some of these items are very easy to remedy, while some may take a bit more effort. This article is intended to cover a few of those common items to help you better serve your existing—and future—client base.

What should a comprehensive maintenance program include? Why would that matter to a homeowner? Taking a cue from the commercial side of business, it is intended to fulfill the coverage extended to our clients by the manufacturer of the shingles and, in many cases, the guarantor of warranty services. Yet most homeowners are unaware of the need or importance of maintenance on their roofs. We all maintain our furnaces, hot water heaters, and air conditioning systems; why not the roof? Maintenance programs should include a written, detailed report of the current roof conditions, as well as pictures. Minor roof repairs should be addressed during this process and any major repairs or remediation should be dealt with as a separate project. Lastly, maintenance programs provide peace of mind and assurance to our clients that their roof systems, which protect their most valuable asset, is being taken care of.

There are many places to begin with a roof maintenance program, so I’ll start with the three items that I see as main failure points across the multitude of projects I’ve been involved with. They are chimneys, gutter systems, and ventilation systems.

Let’s first look at chimneys. They can be built using a variety of methods, so I’ll condense it to three main categories: brick and mortar, siding, and exterior insulation finish systems (EIFS). Let’s dive into each type and some key points to look for when assessing a roof for maintenance.

When dealing with a brick chimney there are a few key points to look at: How do the mortar joints look? Are they cracked? Do they have algae growth on them? Are they discolored from algae? How does the chimney cap look? Are the weep joints in good condition? How does the sealant on the metal flashing look?

When dealing with sided chimneys, here are a few things to look for: How is the top metal cap? How does the siding look? How are the corner boards? Are there baby tins installed and how do they look?

When dealing with stucco or EIFS-type chimneys, look for these things: How is the overall condition of the stucco (or EIFS)? If there is a metal cap on the chimney, how does that look? How is the sidewall flashing, if any is present?

I didn’t address any crickets or saddles, because, simply put, these are often more involved than what a simple maintenance plan should cover; however, they should not be ignored. If there is a problem present, it should be brought to your clients’ attention and dealt with outside the realm of their maintenance agreement.

If your region uses gutter systems—these are always a failure point that gets forgotten about. Take a look at the corners, did they use box miters or hand cut miters? Is the gutter sealant intact or has it shrunk and subsequently cracked? Is there an abundance of detritus and debris in the gutter basin? Are the downspouts clogged? Do they drain into underground drain tiles? Is the entire system pitched correctly? Lastly, are there missing or dislodged hangars?

How does the ventilation system look? What types of vents are on the home and are they in good condition? If there is a ridge vent in place, is the filter full of dirt and debris or is it clear? What does the intake ventilation system comprise of and is it free from obstruction?

The intent of any roof maintenance plan is to address problems before they become bigger issues. The items I discussed in this article should serve a good launching point for your roof maintenance plan. As there are hundreds of different styles of homes built in the United States, there will always be a need for a comprehensive maintenance plan. Once thought only for the commercial side of the business, we are seeing an increase in homeowner awareness into proactive, preventative maintenance programs.



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