

SERVICE WORKS

"UP ON TOP" NEWS

Energy Savings with Single Plies are Real

Interest in energy efficient roof systems has never been higher. Since 2005, double-digit increases in oil, natural gas and electricity rates have spurred energy-related legislation that is quickly gaining momentum. It seems the U.S. is finally getting serious about energy efficiency.

On the low-slope side of the roofing industry, the use of cooler, more reflective roof membranes is a trend that's growing stronger each year. But reflective roof membranes are only part of the issue.

Currently, progressive roofing manufacturers are doing more than just offering reflective roof membranes that save energy in warmer climates. They also are researching and marketing new improved products and installation techniques designed to make roofing

contractors' work quicker and easier. For example, labor-saving self-adhering, reflective single-ply and modified bitumen roof membranes can increase roofing contractors' profit margins and offer significant cost savings for property owners.

Reflective TPO, PVC, EPDM and modified bitumen roof membranes are a good bet for most commercial buildings in warmer climates.

Self-adhering membranes are a growing trend in the single-ply roofing industry and with good reason. These systems address energy costs, labor issues and environmental concerns.

Self-adhering roof membranes usually reduce the time, labor and materials needed to install roof membranes and accessories because the adhesive is factory-applied to the membrane. In addition, such systems' seams and accessories can be heat-welded or installed with self-adhering seams and accessories.

In the field, it takes experienced roof applicators no more than a few minutes to install a 10-foot panel to an approved and properly prepared substrate. This results in substantial labor savings, competitive bids and money saved for building owners. And because many of these membranes meet Energy Star reflectivity requirements, potential energy savings are an added bonus.

A single-ply roof system consists of three or four basic components: structural deck, air or vapor retarder, insula-

tion and single-ply membrane. When installing a sustainable roof system, the manufacturing processes used to produce these components, installation procedures, roof system life expectancy, in-service performance and maintenance must be considered. Just as important is the ability to reuse, recycle or dispose of an old roof system in an environmentally acceptable manner.

As you probably are aware, there is a direct correlation between premature roof system failure and "lowest first cost" design criteria. Unfortunately, the latter is often a driving force behind the roof system selected for installation. It is here contractors' and designers' responsibility for recommending and installing sustainable roof systems is greatest. The good news is adopting sustainable roof strategies often results in longer-lasting roof systems and greater savings than the lowest first cost mentality.

Integrating energy efficiency into roof project specifications requires extra effort on the part of contractors and owners. Although often neglected in the current construction market, all roof specifications should include a detailed life-cycle cost analysis. An energy-efficient roof system that fails prematurely is an environmental disaster if you consider the energy assets required to replace the roof system and disposal costs.

Responsible contractors emphasize the importance of energy efficient roof systems and installation techniques that are easy on the environment and safe to use.



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