

SERVICE WORKS

"UP ON TOP" NEWS

What Do I Do When My Roof Leaks? Part One

Panic? Worry? Go into a meltdown? Or none of the above.

In the life cycle of every roof, at one point or another, you will have to deal with a leak. In general, roofs are not designed to last as long as the rest of the structure. This does not imply that a leak means the roof needs to be replaced, but it can be a warning.

Since water will come in at some point, property managers and facility managers should plan for it before it happens. Strategically placing buckets and plastic tarps in maintenance closets can reduce the time it takes to find them, thus reducing the damage when the leak does occur.

The first thing to remember is not to panic. The roof can be repaired. Most building materials are tolerant of a cer-

tain amount of moisture. The amount of damage done to building materials by moisture is directly related to the amount of moisture and the time of exposure, if both of these can be reduced then the potential for permanent damage to the inside of a building can be reduced. Try to minimize the damage once the leak is discovered, then work diligently to stop the leak and to prevent additional damage.

When a leak is discovered:

- First move away from the wet, leaky area anything that can be damaged by direct moisture. This includes computers, filing cabinets, desks, chairs, pictures on a wall, etc.
- Buckets and plastic should be installed using duct tape to hold them in place in order to catch the water.
- Ceiling tiles should be removed. Ceiling tiles will just spread the leak from one tile to the next. If they are already damaged they will not get any better if left in place. By taking them out, the water should drip more directly from the underside of the roof deck to the floor where buckets and plastic have now been placed.
- Put up wet floor signs, warning signs, perhaps even a warning line so that other building occupants are not walking through this area. It might be worthwhile to utilize a water extraction contractor as this will reduce the potential for permanent damage to the car-

pet or flooring.

Do not go onto the roof if there is any chance of lightning. It is more important to be safe than sorry. Having someone proceed onto the roof in a thunderstorm is not a smart idea and not worth the risk.



When proceeding onto the roof have two people go in case of an accident or in the event someone slips. One person can stay near a doorway or hatchway while the other does the work.

While checking for the source of the leak, check the drains in that area. The whole reason for the leak could be a backed up,

plugged drain. The water flowing over the flashings is a leak that is easily repaired by cleaning the drain. This should be done as part of the facility's normal roof maintenance program, however, sometimes between routine maintenance checks debris and other objects accumulate on the roof clogging up the drain system.

Look for missing or displaced metal from fan housings, ducts and access doors. If the metal is lying on the roof, did it cartwheel, tearing the roof as it traveled? Are skylights intact? Copings?

Part Two/February Newsletter - Notification, temporary repairs, warranties, record keeping.



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