

SERVICE WORKS

"UP ON TOP" NEWS

The Basics of Steep Slope Roofing

All steep-slope roof systems (i.e., roofs with slopes of 25 percent or more) have five basic components:

1. Roof covering: shingles, tile, slate or metal and underlayment that protect the sheathing from weather.

2. Sheathing: boards or sheet material that are fastened to roof rafters to cover a house or building.

3. Roof structure: rafters and trusses constructed to support the sheathing.

4. Flashing: sheet metal or other material installed into a roof system's various joints and valleys to prevent water seepage.

5. Drainage: a roof system's design features, such as shape, slope and layout that affect its ability to shed water.

Choosing a steep slope roof system

There are a number of things to consider when selecting a new roof system. Of course, cost and durability head the list, but aesthetics and architectural style are important, too. The right roof system for your home or building is one that balances these five considerations. The following roofing products commonly are used for steep-slope structures.

Asphalt shingles possess an overwhelming share of the U.S. steep-slope roofing market and can be reinforced with organic or fiberglass materials. Although asphalt shingles reinforced with organic felts have been around much longer, fiberglass-reinforced products now dominate the market.

Organic shingles consist of a cellulose-fiber (i.e., wood) base that is saturated with asphalt and coated with colored mineral granules.

Fiberglass shingles consist of a fiberglass mat, top-and-bottom layers of asphalt, and mineral granules.

A shingle's reinforcement has little effect on its appearance. Organic and fiberglass products are available in laminated (architectural) grades that offer a textured appearance. Zinc or copper-coated ceramic granules also can be applied to organic or fiberglass products to protect against algae attack, a common problem in warm, humid parts of the United States. Both types of shingles are available in a variety of colors.

Wood shingles and shakes are made from cedar, redwood, southern pine and other woods; their natural look is popular in California, the Northwest and parts of the Midwest. Wood shingles are machine sawn; shakes are handmade and rougher looking.

Tile — clay or concrete — is a durable roofing material. Mission and Spanish-style round-topped tiles are used widely in the Southwest and Florida, and flat styles also are available to create French and English looks. Tile is available in a variety of colors and finishes.

Slate is quarried in the United States in Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia. It is available in different colors and grades, depending on its origin. Considered virtually indestructible, it is, however, more expensive than other roofing materials.

Metal, primarily thought of as a low-slope roofing material, has been found to be a roofing alternative for home and building owners with steep-slope roofs. There are two types of metal roofing products: panels and shingles. Numerous metal panel shapes and configurations exist. Metal shingles typically are intended to simulate traditional roof coverings, such as wood shakes, shingles and tile. Apart from their longevity, metal is relatively lightweight.

Synthetic roofing products simulate various traditional roof coverings, such as slate and wood shingles and shakes. However, they do not necessarily have the same properties.



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