

# residentialessentials

## An ounce of prevention

by **Tom Bollnow**

**R**emoving or re-covering residential roof systems should not be compared with other exterior residential renovation projects, such as landscaping, painting or deck construction. Roof system replacement necessitates noise and creation of debris that often are associated with a demolition project. Because homeowners generally do not realize the extent of debris and potential damage that may occur, confrontations can happen.

Disputes with customers can be kept to a minimum if you openly discuss potential hazards involved in the process. After you explain the work schedule and procedures, a homeowner should list items and areas inside and outside his house that may be susceptible to damage.

A thorough examination of exterior and interior conditions should be conducted before finalizing a work contract. These inspections may reveal unforeseen elements that could affect roof system replacement. For example, there may be a perceived roof problem that actually is not related to the roof assembly but related to walls, penetrations, condensation, ventilation, insulation or ice dams.

### Exterior

Before materials and equipment are delivered to a job site, tell your client it would be good neighbor relations to alert neighbors about the scheduled project. In addition, a predetermined staging area should be established—do not assume you can set up materials anywhere on-site.

In preparation for work, your crew should protect all aspects of the surrounding landscape by covering shrubs, plants, lawn, walkways and driveways.

In addition, access to and from the house should be established to accommodate all parties, and grounds should not be overloaded.

The exterior of the house and surrounding attachments also should be safeguarded. Projections, such as decorative fixtures, power lines, awnings, windows and siding, should be shielded from debris. Adjacent conveniences, such as porches or decks; furniture; heating, ventilating and air-conditioning equipment; accessory buildings; and pools, need to be protected from damage.

A roof system re-covering or removal should be planned so that a dwelling can be protected from inclement weather. Weatherproof tarpaulins, such as canvas or reinforced polyethylene, should be used to protect unfinished areas. Roof deck repairs or replacement should be done as soon as possible, and all roof penetrations (vents, pipes, antennae, skylights) need to be fully protected and temporarily weatherproofed. Materials should not be dropped on the roof deck, and loads should be distributed carefully.

### Interior

A thorough inspection of interior conditions is not always possible or necessary before preparing an estimate. If a house's interior is not accessible during a site visit, a homeowner should be contacted to determine the existence of cathedral ceilings, exposed soffits and locations of existing moisture problems. This information is necessary for a comprehensive replacement analysis.

Before beginning construction, conducting an interior inspection of a dwelling with the owner is advisable to

document existing conditions. Previous leak locations and damage should be documented, photographs should be taken if damage is extensive, and locations and configurations of cathedral ceilings should be noted.

In addition, attic spaces should be examined for stored items, insulation, utility lines, and the potential for generating dust and debris.

A house's interior also should be inspected for decorations and accessories that could be damaged from pounding or vibrations during construction. Ceiling fans, light fixtures, shelves and other items should be secured. Pictures, plants, mirrors and collectibles should be moved to a protected location by the homeowner.

### Close out

After roofing work has been completed and a site cleaned, contact the homeowner to inspect the outside and inside of the house. The pre-existing conditions noted before construction began can be used as a primary checklist. Any discrepancies should be noted, and resolutions should be agreed upon by both parties.

Although somewhat time consuming initially, this procedure should develop into a routine that can keep post-construction time to a minimum and customer satisfaction to a maximum.

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