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What Can I Do About My Membrane or Built-Up Roof?

Membrane and built-up roofs are very common on commercial buildings and roofers have developed a number of ways to patch and repair them. The key starting point is the anchorage of the roof deck to the structural members. Consequently, if the opportunity arises to re-roof your low slope roof, you should take advantage of that opportunity to make sure that the roof deck is properly attached to the roof structural members. Short of the opportunities that arise when you re-roof or repair your low-slope roof, the only cost effective retrofit measure we are aware of is to improve the attachment of the flashing around the edge of your roof. Frequently, the nails used to attach the flashing to the fascia boards are too few, have very small heads and are spread too far apart. Most product approval specifications for flashing requires nails at no more than 12-inches on center.



Patch on a section of membrane roof
(click image for larger version)

Beyond this, you should monitor the condition of your roof and if you see indications of leaks or significant aging of the roof, you should get a qualified roofer to check out your low slope roof.

Preparation for Emergency Repairs: While we all hope that a hurricane will not strike where we live, the chances of being struck are higher now that we are in a period of more frequent Atlantic hurricane activity. If you have a membrane or built-up roof, you may want to stock up on things that can be used to perform emergency repairs in case you do have damage. If a hurricane damages your roof, it is important to button it back up as quickly as possible to reduce the chances of additional interior damage to your house. After the hurricane strikes, building materials can be in short supply and tarps may be very hard to find for some time. Even if you will not be able to put the tarp up, having one may allow a neighbor, friend, relative or work crew to help you out.

Tools and materials needed:

- a. Camera with film or available memory if it is a digital camera
- b. Bucket of asphalt roofing cement and roll of 90-pound organic or modified cap sheet
- c. Tarps (large enough to go across the width of your roof and 30 or more feet along the length of your roof)
- d. 1x3 lumber and box of 2-inch long deck screws
- e. Battery Powered (fully charged) Drill for driving screws
- f. Rope and screw eyelets
- g. Ladder

Directions: Take photographs of the damage to use as documentation with the insurance adjuster. If the damage is localized, you can make temporary repairs using the asphalt cement and sections of roof membrane. If the damage is to the roofing membrane over a large area, a tarp may be a more effective option. Stretch the tarp over the damaged area and extend it across the full width of your roof in that area. Anchor the edges of Tarp with 1x3 lumber to the fascia and roof surface just beyond the damaged area. If you have trees nearby that could fall on your roof, you may want to also store some pieces of plywood that can be used to bridge across any roof sheathing damage caused by a falling tree, once the tree is removed.



Temporary protection after storm damage to roof

(click image for larger version)



See [Ladder Safety Tips](#), and do not try to install a tarp in windy conditions. It may drag you and the ladder right off the side of the roof

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