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What Can I Do About My Shingle Roof?

Aging shingles have not proven to be very good at resisting hurricane force winds. The factory-applied adhesive strips and other methods for anchoring the edge of the top shingle to the bottom one can lose their holding capacity and strength over time. In addition, on occasion the top shingle will not adhere properly to the shingle below because of uneven surfaces, the shingles have not yet been exposed to hot enough weather to allow the seal to melt enough to adhere the shingles together, or any number of other reasons. Consequently, it is important to periodically evaluate your shingles and check to make sure that the tabs are well sealed. If you are not comfortable or shouldn't be on a ladder, have a qualified person inspect a number shingle tabs to see if the adhesive has engaged and the tabs are well anchored to the shingle below. Use the tips of your fingers or thumbs to gently lift up on the edge of the shingle tabs. If the shingle tabs are not well stuck to the shingle below, asphalt roofing cement should be used to bond the shingle tab to the shingle below.



If you don't have a license to climb a ladder or your spouse or friends have told you that you have no business on a ladder, you will need to hire someone to do this. There are reasons why roofers have extremely high workers compensation rates (see [Ladder Safety Tips](#)).

Short Term Fixes - Hand tabbing of Shingles: As long as the shingle is still flexible enough to lift and re-set flat, dabs of roofing cement can be applied to reset the tab. To cement the shingle tabs to the underlying shingles, using a caulking gun, place three dabs of asphalt cement about the size of a silver dollar under each tab. Press the tab firmly into the adhesive (step on it if you are comfortable standing on your roof) to assure that the bottom of the shingle tab lies flat on the shingles below and reduce the chances that the wind will pick up the elevated edge of the shingle tab. (Be aware that you will likely get the asphalt cement on your



Video: Resetting tab seal

(click image to view video)

shoes, whether you use your shoe to press on the shingle or not, and you will get it on your hands.) Be sure to cement all loose tabs throughout the entire roof area. If some shingles are only partially loose, you can use a putty knife to break the tab loose so that you can apply the roofing cement. Be careful not to bend the tabs too far up off the roof when applying the adhesive as old shingles often get brittle and they may crack or break. Repair (glue down broken tabs with asphalt cement) any shingles you damage immediately, as a short term solution. However, the fact that shingles are brittle and one or more cracked or broke is a very strong indication that the shingles should be replaced.



Note that this is not something you can do just before a storm as it may take 2 to 4 weeks for the adhesive to cure. You may make the situation worse by trying to do it at the last minute.

Tools and materials needed:

- a. Caulk gun and tubes of asphalt roof adhesive
- b. Putty knife and utility knife
- c. Ladder



Tools for hand tabbing shingles

(click image for larger version)

Directions: Start with shingles that are clearly loose and those around the edge of the roof. Pry up edge of shingles using putty knife. Do not lift tab too high as the shingle may crack or break. Insert dabs of adhesive (silver dollar size - three per tab) or run short lines of adhesive about 1-inch back from edge of shingle. You can provide an extra measure of protection along the gable ends by hand tabbing at least three tabs in from the gable edge.



Video: Hand tabbing shingles

(click image to view video)



Loose Shingle Tab
(click image for larger version)



Applying dabs of asphalt adhesive under shingle tab
(click image for larger version)

Breaking loose a partially adhered shingle to allow hand-tabbing
(click image for larger version)



Pressing tab back against roof after applying dabs of asphalt adhesive
(click image for larger version)

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 your shingle roof is showing its age, 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 digital
- b. Tarps (large enough to cover at least one corner of roof from eave up and over ridge)
- c. 1x3 lumber and box of 2-inch long deck screws
- d. Battery-powered (fully charged) drill for driving screws
- e. Rope and screw eyelets
- f. Ladder

Directions: Take photographs of the damage to use as documentation with the insurance adjuster. Then, stretch tarp over damaged area and extend up and over the ridge. Anchor edges of Tarp with 1x3 lumber to fascia and roof surface just beyond the damaged area. If the side of the roof beyond the ridge is undamaged, use ropes to tie off the tarp to screw eyes installed in the fascia or soffit at the bottom of that side of the roof. Anchoring the tarp in such a way that



it adds holes in the roof cover on undamaged sides of the roof can substantially increase the cost of final repairs. 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

[Establishing a solid water-tight foundation](#)
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[Questions](#)