



Durable Roofing Examines Commercial Roofing Documentation

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Durable Roofing is drawing attention to commercial roofing documentation as recent manufacturer guidance emphasizes the importance of maintaining inspection records, maintenance histories, construction documents and photographs throughout the service life of a commercial roof.

The issue extends beyond paperwork generated when a roofing project is completed. Original specifications may describe what was installed, but years of repairs, inspections, equipment changes and work by other trades can add to or alter the roof's history. When ownership or building personnel change, those records can provide continuity between the system originally installed and the conditions being evaluated years later.

In May 2026, GAF published guidance recommending detailed recordkeeping that includes maintenance records and original construction documentation. The manufacturer also recommends maintaining a roof-access log showing when other trades have accessed the roof. In June, Carlisle SynTec Systems separately advised contractors to maintain photographs throughout commercial roofing projects, particularly

around seams, penetrations, flashings and other critical details.

“A commercial roof can be in place longer than the people managing the building,” said Joe Richards, owner and operator of Durable Roofing. “Property managers change, maintenance personnel change and other contractors work on the roof. Ten years later, somebody may need to know what was installed, what was repaired and what changed. The documentation is what carries that history forward.”

That history can become particularly useful when a contractor evaluates a commercial roof it did not install. Available documents may identify the original roofing system, specifications, warranty or guarantee information, previous repairs and maintenance activity. When those records are incomplete, more of the roof's history has to be reconstructed from current conditions, field investigation and whatever information remains available.

Identifying the existing roof assembly can also affect decisions about later work. Commercial roofs may contain multiple layers and materials, while manufacturer requirements vary by system. Records identifying the membrane, insulation and other components can supplement what is observable during an inspection and provide additional context when repairs, penetrations or other alterations are being considered.

Original installation documents, however, only establish a starting point. During the service life of a roof, leaks may be investigated, repairs performed and rooftop equipment replaced or added. Mechanical contractors, electricians and other trades may also perform work affecting penetrations or roof details. Inspection reports, repair records and photographs can preserve that history for future building personnel.

Documentation created while roofing work is underway adds another layer to that record. Conditions beneath the visible surface may not become accessible until portions of an existing system are opened. Insulation, decking, previous repairs or other concealed conditions can differ from what was assumed before work began. Photographs and written records can establish what was encountered and document resulting changes to the scope.

“Completion photos are useful, but they are only part of the record,” Richards said. “If conditions change after the roof is opened, that should be documented too. Years from now, the person looking at that roof should not have to depend on somebody remembering what was found underneath it.”

Warranty and guarantee requirements provide another reason for maintaining roofing documents. GAF's May guidance notes that maintenance records may be required under certain commercial guarantee programs. Requirements vary by manufacturer, roofing system and specific coverage, making the applicable warranty or guarantee documents an important part of the building owner's roof file.

Project closeout therefore does not necessarily mark the end of the documentation process. Completion photographs, manufacturer documents, warranty information and maintenance recommendations can become the starting point for the roof's continuing operating history. Future inspections, repairs and changes to rooftop equipment can then be added as conditions evolve.

Durable Roofing addresses many of those considerations within its commercial roofing services, where evaluation, roof conditions, project requirements and long-term building needs can influence recommendations. The documentation discussion also expands on the company's recently published project planning information, which addresses progress photographs, conditions discovered during work, coordination of changes and final warranty records as part of commercial project management and closeout.

The recent industry guidance also emphasizes the value of maintaining those records after a project is finished, giving future building personnel and contractors a clearer history when the roof is inspected, repaired or eventually replaced.

Durable Roofing is a fourth-generation family-owned roofing contractor based in Midlothian, Illinois. Founded in 1917, the company provides commercial, industrial and residential roof inspection, repair, restoration, replacement and maintenance services throughout the Chicago area. Its project experience includes occupied commercial properties, industrial facilities and high-rise structures requiring coordinated access and scheduling.

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Durable Roofing Company Inc.

Durable Roofing is a fourth-generation, family-owned roofing company serving Southwest Chicago Suburbs since 1917. We provide residential, commercial, and industrial roofing with clear documentation and long-term workmanship and warranty support.

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