Not Every Wet Ceiling Is a Roof Leak: Austin Roofing Company Publishes Guide to Telling Roof Leaks From AC Condensate and Attic Condensation

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AUSTIN, TX - November 12, 2026 -
Austin Roofing Company, a Central Texas roofing contractor serving homeowners since 2008, today published a guide for a problem that sends many Austin homeowners straight to the wrong contractor: a water stain on the ceiling. In a house with the air conditioner in the attic, the company says, ceiling water has three likely sources, and only one of them is the roof. The guide shows homeowners how to tell them apart before paying anyone to fix the wrong thing.

The guide, Austin Roofing Company?s guide to roof leaks versus condensation, comes down to one rule: match the water to the weather. Water that appears during or after rain is almost always the roof. Water that appears on a hot, dry day while the air conditioner is running is almost always the AC, from a clogged drain line, an overflowing pan or sweating ducts. Water that appears after a cold night, spread out rather than concentrated in one spot, is usually condensation in the attic.

?A roofer can?t fix a clogged condensate line, and an honest one will tell you so,? said an Austin Roofing Company spokesperson. ?We?d rather spend twenty minutes in an attic and send a homeowner to their

HVAC company than sell a roof repair that won?t stop the water. The simplest tool is a log. Every time you see water, write down the date, whether it rained in the last day, and whether the AC was running, and take a photo. Three entries are often enough to see the pattern.?

The air conditioner gets particular attention because in many Austin homes the air handler sits in the attic directly above a finished ceiling. Every hour it runs in summer, its cooling coil pulls water out of the air into a pan and down a drain line, and when that line clogs or the pan rusts through, the water has nowhere to go but down. The guide lists the telltale signs: water on dry days, a stain near the air handler or return grille, water dripping from a pipe above a window, which is usually the secondary drain signaling that the main line is blocked, an AC that suddenly stops cooling because a float switch has shut it off, and supply vents ringed with water where cold ducts sweat in a hot attic. Citing the U.S. Department of Energy, the guide warns that blocked condensate drains in attics and closets can go unnoticed long enough to cause severe water damage to ceilings, floors and walls, and advises homeowners who see these signs to turn the system off at the thermostat and call an HVAC company.

Attic condensation follows a different pattern. Warm, damp household air works its way into the attic through bathroom fans, hatches and gaps around lights, and when a cold front drops the roof deck below that air?s dew point, moisture condenses on the underside of the deck and on the tips of roofing nails, then drips when the sun warms the roof. Homeowners can look from the attic hatch with a flashlight for droplets or frost on nail tips and damp insulation over a wide area. A frequent culprit is a bathroom fan that vents into the attic instead of outside, sending shower steam straight onto cold rafters. The fix depends on the cause: a proper duct to a roof cap or soffit vent for the fan, or balanced soffit-intake and ridge-exhaust ventilation for an attic that can?t move air.

A true roof leak is the one source that stays quiet through a dry spell, no matter how hard the AC runs. It appears during or within a day of rain, grows after each storm, and usually sits near something that passes through the roof: a chimney, plumbing vent, skylight, valley, or the line where a roof meets a wall. Because water travels before it drips, the entry point is often several feet uphill from the stain, which is why patching the spot directly above it so often fails. The guide urges homeowners to stay off wet roofs, and in the meantime to shut off any circuit near the water, turn off the AC if the water is near the air handler, catch the drips and photograph the spot each time it gets wet.

Austin Roofing Company offers free roof inspections and written estimates with no obligation, photographing what it finds so homeowners can see the source for themselves. When the water is coming from an AC unit, a duct or a bathroom fan, the company says so and the homeowner pays nothing. For active leaks during a storm, the company responds the same day, including temporary tarping.

About Austin Roofing Company

Austin Roofing Company, formerly known as Altair Austin Roofing Company, is a Central Texas roofing contractor that has served homeowners since 2008. Featured on KXAN?s Studio 512, the BBB-accredited company provides roof repair, replacement, installation, storm damage repair, inspections and commercial roofing across Austin and the surrounding metro, with 24/7 emergency service.

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Austin Roofing Company, LLC

When you choose Austin Roofing Company, you're getting a team that treats your home with the respect it deserves and delivers results that exceed expectations.

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