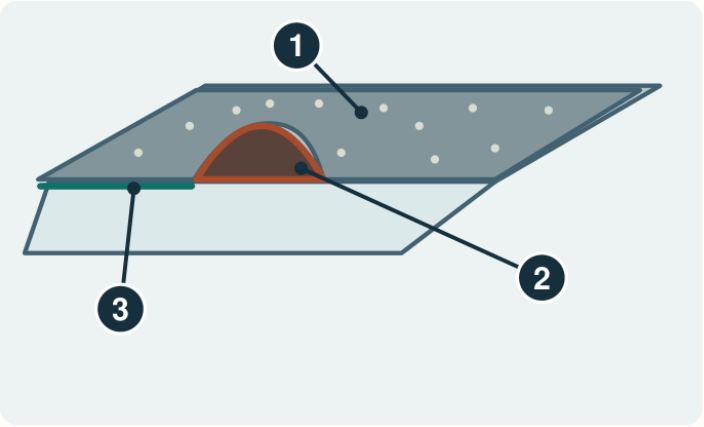
ROOF MAINTENANCE HANDBOOK

Modified bitumen

Modified bitumen comes in rolls. The overlaps, or laps, join the sheets into a continuous waterproof layer. Some top sheets have granules and others have an approved coating. Start by finding the installation record so the roofer knows which sheets and surfacing to maintain.

Spot an open end lap



1. **Granulated cap sheet**
   Track bare areas and changes in surfacing.
2. **Fishmouth**
   A raised lip leaves an opening between sheets.
3. **Adjoining lap**
   Photograph where the edge returns to flat.

An illustrated modified-bitumen sheet end shows granules and a localized fishmouth, an upturned edge that opens a route between sheets.

Set up your roof record

Identify the roof

Gather the installation and repair dates, roof plan, product names, installer contact and written warranty. If any are missing, ask the roofer to identify the assembly at the first visit.

Choose inspection points

Sketch the building and give each roof section a name. Mark where water exits, where equipment sits and any rooms with a leak history. Take dated starting photos from safe ground or interior locations.

Assign a contact

Write down who checks the building after bad weather, who can authorize repairs and whom to call if water enters. Keep those details with the roof record.

INSPECTION CHECKLIST

What to check

Start from the ground and inside the building. Ask a qualified roofing crew to photograph details that require roof access. Use the same viewing points on each visit.

Make a simple roof map

On a floor plan, mark drains, rooftop equipment, repaired areas and the rooms beneath them. Ask the roofer to label close-up photos with those same locations. Keep the roof access key and visit log with the building manager.

Look along the overlaps

Use the roofer’s photos to spot an end curling up like an open mouth, a long wrinkle running into a lap, or a split across a joint. Note its location and arrange a repair assessment. Leave probing and lifting sheets to the roofer.

Track wear on the top sheet

Compare the same area in dated photos. A growing bare patch in a granulated sheet, cracked exposed asphalt or a raised bubble that splits deserves attention. Do not puncture a bubble to see what is inside.

Check where the roof meets a wall

Ask for photos where the roofing turns up a wall or the base of a rooftop unit. Look for a pulled-away edge, slipping sheet or loose metal cover. Record the room below if the leak occurs only in wind-driven rain.

Follow the rain to its outlet

Observe downspout discharge from ground level. Record when rain ended and whether a puddle remains in later photos. Arrange debris removal and inspection of any high drain or low bay. Water still present roughly two dry days later deserves investigation.

Protect service paths

Before sending an HVAC crew, give them the approved route and require a photo of the finished work. Have the roof contractor review new supports or penetrations. Keep sharp tools, loose screws and discarded equipment off the sheet.

Record the change. Take one wide photo to locate the area and one closer view if you can do so safely. Mark the location and date on your plan. Record a dry observation as well as one after rain.

MAINTENANCE CALENDAR

Build a routine

Set recurring dates for spring and fall reviews, then add checks after severe weather, leaks or work by other trades. Follow any inspection and notice intervals in the written warranty.

Spring

Compare winter and spring photos with the last inspection. Schedule a roofer to check field laps, wall flashing, previous repairs and outlets, then assign each finding a person and due date.

Leaf fall

Arrange safe removal of leaves at drains and scuppers before heavy rain. Watch discharge at ground level afterward. Ask an arborist about limbs that repeatedly drop debris onto the roof.

After wind, hail or rooftop work

Record the date and affected wing. Request close-ups of displaced equipment, impact marks and punctures before allowing routine traffic through that area. Schedule another interior check during the next rain.

Who handles what?

Homeowner or property owner

Review the building from safe areas. File photos, set a repair budget and approve timely professional inspections. Tell the roofer about recurring leaks and past repairs.

Property manager

Maintain an access log and notify tenants when crews need a room or roof area. Track warranty notice deadlines, work orders and the person responsible for each open issue.

Maintenance staff

Log interior stains and drainage observations. Keep ground-level outlets clear where safely accessible. Document equipment service and ask contractors for before-and-after photos of penetrations and walkways.

Roofing contractor

Verify conditions that require roof access, moisture checks or material testing. Confirm the repair method and compatible products for this roof. Return a marked plan, photos and a written scope.

REPAIR DECISIONS

When something changes

If water is entering now, record the location and time and call the responsible manager or roofer. Keep people clear of water near electrical fixtures, a bulging or sagging ceiling, or loose material. Call emergency services if anyone faces immediate danger.

One end lap curls up
Keep traffic away from the loose edge and request a prompt roofer visit. Ask for the surrounding bond and insulation to be checked before the lap is rebuilt.

A recurring ceiling stain is several feet from the patch
Mark both locations on the plan. Record storm direction, onset and whether the air conditioner was running. Have the contractor trace the route through flashings, laps and drains before pricing another patch.

Bare patches spread across several rolls
Request a map of surfacing loss and moisture findings. A sound, dry base may support a compatible treatment. Extensive separation or wet material calls for a removal scope and comparison of alternatives.

Ask for these details in writing

• Identify the cap sheet and repair system, and photograph each lap or flashing defect before covering it.

• Confirm the extent of trapped moisture or damaged decking where indicated. List what must come out and how the drain detail will be restored.

• At closeout, obtain labeled after-photos, repair materials, warranty notice details and a follow-up date. Check the original symptom after the next rain.

Technical references

RCABC • Roof Maintenance Guide, sections 2 and 3 www.rcabc.org

ARMA • Effects of Ponding Water on Low-Slope Asphalt Roof Systems www.asphaltroofing.org

Keep the roof-specific warranty, approved details and inspection reports with these references.

PRINTABLE AND FILLABLE LOG

Roof maintenance record

Use one copy for each observation or repair. Save the completed form with the matching photos and roof plan. Reopen the item after the next comparable rain or service visit to confirm the outcome.

Building / address

Roof section / interior room

Recorded by

Date and time

Weather / recent roof work

What changed? Include the exact location and first time observed.

Photo IDs / roof-plan marker / prior related entry

Action taken / person notified / work order or warranty claim number

Person responsible for follow-up

Follow-up due date

Result / repair date / date rechecked / next review