



A GUIDE TO ROOFING MATERIALS

TYPE	COST	DURABILITY (Years)	MINIMUM SLOPE	ADVANTAGES	LIMITATIONS
Asphalt Shingles	Inexpensive	12 – 25	2 in 12	Easy installation; Available in a variety of weights and colors; Requires little maintenance; Easy to repair	Poor fire resistance
Roll Roofing	Inexpensive	10 -15	1 in 12	Easy installation and maintenance	Poor fire resistance; Drab appearance
Built-up Roofing	Moderate	10 – 20	0 in 12	Most waterproof of all roofing	Poor fire resistance; Must be installed professionally; Leaks difficult to locate
Wood Shingles and Shakes	Moderate to Expensive	15 – 30 (Shingles) 25 -75 (Shakes)	3 in 12 (steeper in humid climates)	Easy installation; Attractive rustic appearance; Natural insulator	Highly flammable unless specially treated; Shingles must be laid over open planks
Slate	Expensive	50 – 100	4 in 12	Attractive traditional appearance; Fire resistant	Heavy, Brittle; Requires sturdy roof support; Long and delicate installation may require special tools; Needs regular replacement of damaged pieces; Difficult to repair
Ceramic Tiles	Expensive	50 - 100	4 in 12	Attractive traditional appearance; Fire resistant	Heavy, Brittle; Requires sturdy roof support; Time-consuming installation requires special tool; Availability of replacement pieces unreliable; Difficult to repair
Metal panels	Moderate	25 - 50	2 in 12	Easy installation and patching can be painted any color; Fire resistant	Subject to damage from wind, trees, any contact

Comparing roofing materials: In this chart, “Cost” refers to the relative cost of materials alone; it does not include the cost of labor. In most cases, the cost of professional installation is higher for the traditional roofing materials – slate, tile, and wood shingles and shakes – than for the newer materials which are designed to be installed more quickly. The minimum slope is the slope at which a specific material begins to provide adequate protection against water. All the materials listed can be applied to surfaces steeper than the minimum.

As slopes increase, such factors as appearance and durability should be considered. For example, Roll roofing provides adequate covering for both steep and gentle slopes, but its plain style and poor durability make it an unlikely choice for any but the most gradual slopes. “Durability” is a rough measure of how long a roof will last with proper maintenance. The figures given apply to homes in temperate climates. The columns listing advantages and limitations for each material concentrate on installation and maintenance.