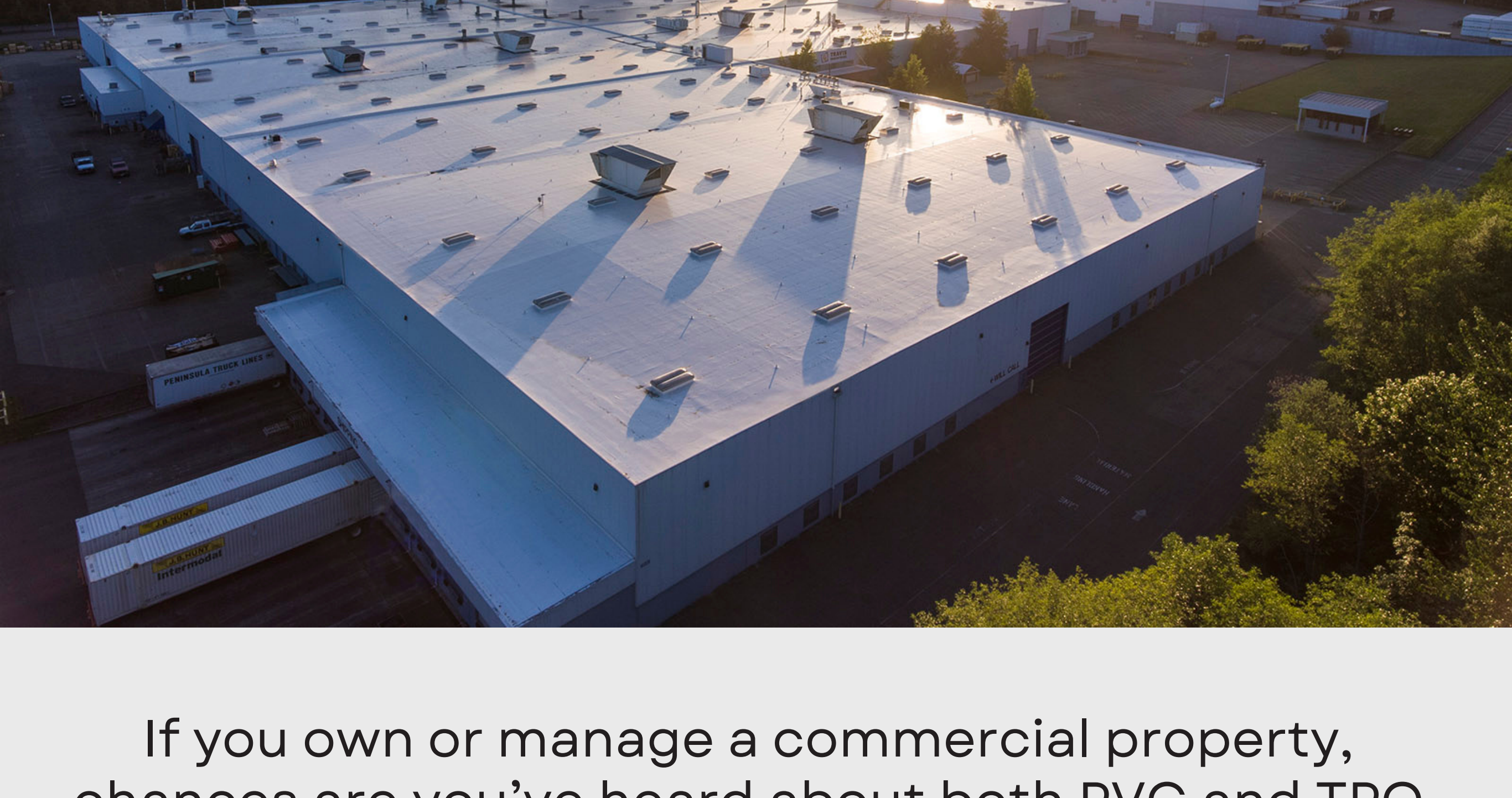


PVC VS. TPO ROOFING: WHAT'S BETTER FOR YOUR COMMERCIAL BUILDING?



HOT TOPIC

JUNE 2026 ISSUE



If you own or manage a commercial property, chances are you've heard about both PVC and TPO roofing systems. At first glance, they look nearly identical; both are white reflective membranes commonly installed on flat roofs. But once you dig deeper, there are major differences in performance, longevity, installation, and long-term value.

At Alternative Roofing Systems, we specialize in PVC roofing systems, including industry-leading products from Duro-Last. While both materials have their place in commercial roofing, we believe PVC consistently delivers superior long-term performance for many buildings throughout the Pacific Northwest.

WHAT IS TPO ROOFING?

TPO stands for **Thermoplastic Polyolefin**. It's a single-ply roofing membrane designed to provide energy efficiency and waterproof protection at a competitive price point.

TPO became popular because it offered a more affordable alternative to PVC while still providing:

- Heat-welded seams
- Reflective white surfaces
- Energy efficiency
- Flexible installation options

TPO is commonly used on warehouses, office buildings, retail spaces, and other large commercial roofs where upfront cost is a major factor.

WHAT IS PVC ROOFING?

PVC stands for **Polyvinyl Chloride**. PVC roofing has been used commercially for decades and is known for exceptional durability, chemical resistance, and long-term waterproofing performance.

One of the biggest advantages of PVC systems, especially custom-fabricated systems like Duro-Last, is the ability to reduce field seams and installation variables. Many roof details, penetrations, and flashing components can be prefabricated before they even arrive at the job site.

That means:

- Fewer opportunities for leaks
- Faster installation
- Better consistency
- Stronger long-term performance

PVC roofing is especially popular for:

- Restaurants
- Medical facilities
- Manufacturing buildings
- Schools
- Commercial buildings with rooftop equipment
- Buildings exposed to grease or chemicals

PVC VS. TPO: THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCES

1. Long-Term Durability

Both PVC and TPO are designed to protect flat roofs, but PVC has the longer proven track record in commercial roofing. Known for strong seams, flexibility, and resistance to punctures, chemicals, and grease, PVC is widely recognized for reliable long-term performance.

TPO can still be an effective system when properly installed, but product formulations and long-term performance can vary more between manufacturers.

2. Chemical & Grease Resistance

PVC stands out when it comes to resistance against grease, oils, and chemicals. That's why it's commonly recommended for restaurants, industrial facilities, and buildings with rooftop exhaust systems.

For buildings exposed to heavy rooftop contaminants, PVC often provides better long-term protection than TPO.

3. Installation Quality

One major advantage of systems like Duro-Last PVC is custom fabrication. Many flashings and roof details are prefabricated before installation, helping reduce field seams, installation time, and opportunities for leaks. Traditional TPO systems are typically fabricated entirely on-site, which can increase labor time and installation variables.

4. Energy Efficiency

Both PVC and TPO are reflective "cool roof" systems designed to reduce heat absorption, improve energy efficiency, and lower rooftop temperatures. In this category, both systems perform well.

5. Cost

TPO generally has a lower upfront cost, while PVC often delivers greater long-term value through durability, reduced maintenance, and extended performance.

For many building owners, investing more upfront can help avoid costly repairs and premature replacement later.

BUILT FOR THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Why We Install PVC Roofing

At Alternative Roofing Systems, we install PVC roofing because **we've seen how well it performs** on commercial buildings throughout the Pacific Northwest.

PVC systems offer:

- Proven durability
- Excellent waterproofing protection
- Strong seam integrity
- Resistance to rooftop contaminants
- Reliable manufacturer warranties
- Custom-fabricated advantages through Duro-Last systems

While every building is different, PVC consistently stands out as a dependable long-term roofing solution for many commercial properties.

THE BOTTOM LINE

TPO can be a good option for budget-focused projects, but when long-term durability, leak protection, and performance matter most, **PVC roofing systems often come out ahead**.

Choosing the right commercial roofing system today can save significant time, money, and maintenance costs down the road.



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