GETTING YOUR FLAT ROOF READY FOR THE RAINY SEASON: FALL PREP FOR PNW ROOFS

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HOT TOPIC
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DURO-LAST. THE WORLD'S BEST ROOF®

Fall in the Pacific Northwest brings cooler temperatures, falling leaves, and most importantly for commercial property owners, plenty of rain. For flat and low-slope roofs, that means now is the right time to make sure your roofing system is ready to handle months of wet weather.

A small roofing issue that goes unnoticed during the dry summer months can quickly become a leak, drainage problem, or costly interior damage once the rain returns.

The good news? A little fall preparation can go a long way.



WHY FALL ROOF MAINTENANCE MATTERS IN THE PNW

Pacific Northwest weather can be tough on commercial flat roofs. Heavy rainfall, wind, debris, and repeated wet conditions all put your roofing system to the test.

Unlike steep-slope roofs, flat roofs are designed with carefully planned drainage systems to move water toward drains, scuppers, and other drainage points. When those systems become blocked or a roofing membrane has a problem, water can begin to collect where it shouldn't.

That's why fall is an ideal time to inspect your roof and address potential problems before the rainy season is in full swing.

1. CHECK YOUR ROOF DRAINS AND SCUPPERS

One of the most important things to check before the rainy season is your roof's **drainage system.** Leaves, branches, dirt, and other debris can accumulate around drains and scuppers, restricting water flow. If water can't drain properly, it can lead to ponding and put unnecessary stress on the roofing system.

Before the heavy rain arrives, make sure:

- Roof drains are clear of leaves and debris
- Scuppers and gutters are free-flowing
- Drain strainers are properly installed and unobstructed
- Debris isn't accumulating in low areas
- Downspouts are directing water away from the building

Keeping your drainage system clear is one of the simplest ways to help your flat roof perform properly during the wet season.

2. LOOK FOR SIGNS OF ROOF DAMAGE

Summer is a good time for a roof to dry out, but that doesn't mean it hasn't experienced wear and tear.

Before fall storms arrive, look for signs of damage such as:

- Cracks or splits in the roofing membrane
- Blisters or bubbles
- Loose or damaged flashing
- Deteriorated sealants
- Damaged roof edges
- Punctures or tears
- Areas where the membrane appears loose or compromised

Even a relatively small defect can become a much bigger problem when exposed to months of rain. If you notice something unusual, having it evaluated early can help determine whether a simple repair is enough or whether a larger roofing issue needs attention.

3. PAY ATTENTION TO FLASHING AND PENETRATIONS

Rooftop equipment, vents, pipes, skylights, curbs, and other penetrations create potential points of vulnerability.

The roofing membrane may be in good condition overall, but damaged flashing or failed sealants around a penetration can still allow water into the building. During a fall inspection, these areas deserve special attention.

Look for:

- Cracked or deteriorated sealants
- Loose flashing
- Gaps around penetrations
- Signs of previous repairs
- Water staining around interior ceiling areas below rooftop penetrations

Addressing these areas before the rainy season can help prevent water from finding its way into your building.

4. REMOVE ROOF DEBRIS

The PNW's fall weather means leaves and branches are inevitable.

While a few leaves may not seem like a major concern, accumulated debris can hold moisture against the roof surface and contribute to blocked drainage.

Branches and other sharp debris can also potentially damage roofing membranes.

Keep the roof surface clear and make sure nearby trees are not creating an excessive amount of debris over the building.

5. CHECK FOR PONDING WATER

Flat roofs aren't actually completely flat. They are designed with subtle slopes that direct water toward designated drainage points.

However, if you notice areas where water consistently collects after rainfall, it's worth having them investigated.

Persistent ponding can indicate an issue with drainage, roof slope, insulation, or the roofing system itself.

The goal isn't simply to remove the water after every storm. It's to understand why the water is collecting there in the first place.

6. INSPECT THE ROOF BEFORE YOU NEED IT

One of the biggest mistakes property owners can make is waiting for a leak before scheduling a roof inspection.

By the time water is visible inside the building, the underlying problem may have been developing for much longer.

A professional fall roof inspection can help identify potential issues before they turn into emergency repairs. It also gives property owners a better opportunity to plan and budget for necessary work rather than dealing with an unexpected roofing problem in the middle of a storm.

7. DON'T FORGET THE INTERIOR

Roof maintenance isn't limited to the rooftop. After inspecting the exterior, check the interior areas beneath the roof for signs of moisture.

Keep an eye out for:

- Water stains
- Discolored ceiling tiles
- Damp insulation
- Musty odors
- Peeling paint
- Signs of previous leaks

These can be clues that water is getting through the roofing system—even if the source isn't immediately obvious.

GET YOUR ROOF RAIN-READY

A little fall maintenance can help prevent bigger roofing problems during the Pacific Northwest's rainy season. Clear drains, remove debris, inspect flashing and the membrane, and address ponding or minor damage before they become costly repairs.

At **Alternative Roofing Systems Inc.,** we help commercial property owners **stay ahead of roofing issues with preventative maintenance, repairs, and complete roofing solutions.**
Don't wait for the first major storm. Get your flat roof ready for the rainy season today.

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