

### WHAT IS A ROOFER



*“Roofing is the most important trade because it protects everything else”.*

A roofer is a professional who specializes in roof construction. Roofers monitor the entire process of roofing in commercial as well as residential construction. They analyze the construction plans and make sure that the roofing is installed correctly. Roofers also determine the materials,

substrates and appropriate accessories to be used for roof installations.

#### **What Roofers Do**

**Roofers provide the basic need of shelter** and work on the installation, repair and renovation of new and existing roofs; using a variety of materials including shingles, single plies, asphalt, and metal. Roofers typically do the following:

- Inspect problem roofs to determine the best way to repair them
- Measure roofs to calculate the quantities of materials needed
- Replace damaged or rotting joists or plywood
- Install vapor barriers and/or layers of insulation
- Install shingles, single-ply, asphalt, metal, or other materials to make the roof watertight

#### **Types of Roofers**

There are **4 main types of roofers**:

1. **Shinglers**, who primarily install shingles, shakes, tiles, and other nail-on products on roofs with 3:12 pitches or above
2. **Metal roofers**, who focus on metal panels
3. **Single-ply roofers**, who focus on flat roofs such as EPDM, TPO and PVC.
4. **"Hot" roofers**, who work using asphalt-based products

It is not uncommon, however, for companies to have their roofers do multiple styles of roofing.

#### **Types of Roofs**

**Roofs are the first layer of protection against the elements.** Properly installed roofs keep water from leaking into buildings and damaging the interior,

equipment, or furnishings. There are **three basic types of roofs**: low-slope, steep-slope, and sustainable.

1. **Low-slope.** Low-slope roofs rise less than 3 inches per horizontal foot and are installed in layers. Low-slope roofs make up about two-thirds of all roofs. Most commercial, industrial, and apartment buildings use this type.
2. **Steep-slope.** Steep-slope roofs rise more than 3 inches per horizontal foot and make up most of the remaining roofs; most single-family homes use this type of roof. Although asphalt shingles are commonly used on steep slopes, tile, solar shingles, fiberglass shingles, metal shingles, or shakes (rough wooden shingles) are used as well.
3. **Sustainable.** A small but increasing number of buildings now have vegetative roofs that incorporate landscape materials into traditional roofing systems. Solar is another sustainable roof that is becoming increasingly popular.

Roofers may specialize in the installation and replacement of one or more of these three roof systems.

#### **Work Environment**

Roofers work outdoors, year-round in all types of weather. Working outside in Colorado can be considered a job perk, but a roofer also must be willing to take the good with the bad. Colorado has both hot and cold days and the ability to work in changing weather conditions is often required, particularly when performing repairs. However, roofers rarely install roofs when it rains/snows or when it is very windy or cold.

Roofing work can be physically demanding. It involves heavy lifting, as well as climbing, bending, and kneeling. Overtime may be required to finish a job, especially during busier summer months.

**Roofing work can also be very rewarding.** Whether you're working downtown on a high-rise or a home in the suburbs or mountains, you get to work in a variety of places making each day different and interesting. You'll experience the satisfaction of accomplishment, as the results of each day's work are easily seen when you leave for the day.

### HOW TO BECOME A ROOFER

Most roofers in Colorado learn on-the-job.

#### Education

Although there are no specific education requirements for roofers, high school courses in math, vocational education, mechanical drawing, and blueprint reading are considered helpful.

#### Training

Training is mostly done on-the-job and consists of instruction in which experienced workers teach new workers how to use roofing tools, equipment, machines and materials.

The Colorado Roofing Association (CRA) offers an **Introduction to Roofing** course that can give new roofers an advantage over other applicants with 60% of the class being hands-on training. Get more info at: <http://coloradoroofing.org/member/training-center/>

#### Important Qualities

A roofer is described as being strong, accurate, careful and efficient.

Roofers must also possess these important qualities:

- **Balance.** Roofing is often done on steep slopes at significant heights. Because of this, workers should have excellent balance to avoid falling.
- **Physical strength/stamina.** Roofers must have the endurance to perform strenuous duties throughout the day (i.e. spend many hours on their feet, bending/stooping, lifting and carrying heavy materials).
- **Unafraid of heights.** Because work is often done at significant heights, roofers must not fear working far above the ground.
- **Integrity.** Because our industry sometime comes under scrutiny, an honest person with strong moral principles is a must.
- **Teamwork.** Be able to work effectively within a group. Roofers usually work side-by-side on a team/crew to complete a job.



*“As a roofer you are able to do something valuable and important for others.”*

#### PAY

The median annual wage for roofers was **\$36,720 - \$42,170** in May 2015. Roofers start at \$12-\$15/hour. Pay increases as roofers learn to do more and increase their skill set. Wages are competitive and some employers offer benefit packages (i.e., medical, 401K/retirement).

#### Job Outlook

Employment of roofers is projected to grow 13 percent from 2014 to 2024, faster than the average for all occupations. **Job opportunities for roofers should be excellent.** Demand for roofers is less vulnerable to downturns than for other construction trades because much roofing work consists of repair and reroofing, in addition to new construction. Workers in Colorado may experience periods of unemployment but with our State’s continued growth and susceptibility to hail and high winds, there looks to be plenty of work to go around for some time.

#### Career Path

