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Catch Roof Problems Early:

A Florida Homeowner's Inspection Checklist



A Complete Roof Inspection Checklist With 20 Simple Checks to Help Florida Homeowners Spot Damage Early, Prevent Leaks, and Protect Their Home

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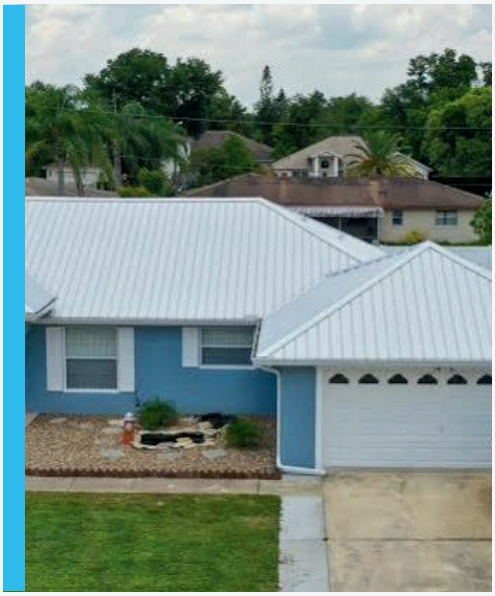
Chapter 1: Why Your Florida Roof Needs Attention

Florida Weather Puts Roofs to Work

A roof in Florida rarely gets much of a break. Intense sunlight can heat roofing materials for hours, followed by heavy afternoon rain, humidity, strong winds, and seasonal storms. Over time, those conditions can expose weaknesses that are almost impossible to notice at a quick glance from the driveway.



Imagine noticing a faint brown spot on the ceiling after a summer storm. A few days later, the mark dries and seems to disappear. It would be easy to forget about it.

Then another storm arrives and the stain returns, only larger.

The original mark may have been the first warning that water was finding a path through the roofing system. Catching that clue earlier could have made the problem easier to investigate before additional moisture entered the home.

A homeowner roof check is not about diagnosing every problem yourself. It is about learning what normal looks like so you can recognize when something changes.

You don't need roofing experience to recognize early warning signs. These four simple habits can help you stay ahead of potential problems.

Check 1: Know approximately how old your roof is.

Check 2: Look for visible changes after severe weather.

Check 3: Keep track of leaks, stains, or repairs that return.

Check 4: Save records from previous roofing work and inspections.

When Should You Look at Your Roof?

You do not need to inspect your home every weekend. Instead, pay attention when conditions give you a reason to look.

Check the property after strong wind or heavy rain. Take another look when you notice moisture inside the home. Older roofs deserve additional attention as materials begin showing wear.

Buying or selling a property is another good time to understand the roof's condition.

The goal is simple. Find concerns while you still have time to make an informed decision rather than discovering them during an emergency.

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Chapter 2: Inspect the Roof From the Ground



Start With the Roofing Surface

You can learn a surprising amount about a roof without ever stepping onto it.

Walk around the property and look from several safe locations. A different viewing angle may reveal something you could not see from the front yard.

Do not worry about identifying the exact cause of a problem. Look for visible differences.

Check 5: Look for missing shingles or tiles.

Check 6: Watch for cracked, curled, lifted, loose, or broken roofing materials.

Suppose you walk outside after a windy night and find several pieces of shingles near the driveway. From below, the roof still appears mostly intact.

Those pieces matter.

Instead of waiting for rain to confirm there is a problem, photograph what you found and take a closer look from the ground. Something changed, and that change is worth investigating.

Study the Roofline

Move farther away from the house and look at the overall shape of the roof.

Check 7: Watch for sagging, dipping, or sections that suddenly appear uneven.

A noticeable change in the roof line deserves professional attention. Do not climb onto the roof to investigate a suspected structural concern yourself.

Check Gutters, Flashing, and Drainage Areas

Roof problems don't always begin in the middle of a large roofing surface. Edges, valleys, gutters, penetrations, and areas where different materials meet deserve attention because water frequently moves through these locations.

> **Check 8:** Look for damaged gutters, loose components, or visible flashing that appears separated.

Gutters should move water away from the home. When they clog or are damaged, water may collect or overflow where it shouldn't.

Flashing helps protect vulnerable transitions in the roofing system. If something appears loose or displaced, make a note of it.



Look Above and Around the Roof

Trees can create both gradual and sudden roofing problems.

> **Check 9:** Look for branches, leaves, or debris touching or resting on the roof.

A branch that constantly rubs against roofing material can create wear over time. A heavy limb falling during a storm can cause damage immediately.

Keeping the surrounding area clear can also make future inspections easier.

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Chapter 3: Look for Warning Signs Inside Your Home



Check Ceilings and Walls

Some of the most important roof clues are discovered indoors.

You may first notice a small stain above the couch, peeling paint near a wall, or drywall that feels unusually soft after several days of rain.

Do not dismiss these changes simply because there is no active dripping.

Check 10: Look for new or expanding stains on ceilings and walls.

Check 11: Watch for peeling paint, bubbling finishes, damp drywall, or unexplained moisture.

Water does not always travel straight down from the point where it entered. It can move along framing and other building materials before becoming visible.

That means the stain you see inside may not sit directly beneath the roofing problem.

Pay Attention to Smell and Humidity

Your eyes aren't your only useful inspection tool.

Imagine walking into a guest bedroom after several rainy days and noticing that the room smells musty even though everything appears dry.

That change should not be ignored.

Check 12: Pay attention to persistent musty odors or areas that suddenly feel more damp than usual.

Moisture can collect behind finishes or in spaces that are not immediately visible. A recurring smell can be another clue that something deserves investigation.

Look in Accessible Attic Areas

If your attic can be entered safely, it may reveal problems before they become obvious in the living space below.

Bring a flashlight and remain only on stable, designated walking surfaces.

Check 13: Look for wet insulation, dark staining on wood, damp roof decking, active dripping, or daylight entering where it should not.

Never step between structural supports or move into areas where you cannot clearly see safe footing.

The purpose is to observe, not to perform repairs.

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Chapter 4: Check Your Roof After Florida Storms



Start With a Walk Around the Property

Once severe weather has passed and conditions are safe, begin outside at ground level.

Do not immediately reach for a ladder.

Take a slow walk around the entire home.

Check 14: Look for shingles, tile pieces, metal, or other roofing materials on the ground.

Check 15: Look for fallen branches, damaged gutters, impact areas, or visible changes to the roof.

Photos taken before storm season can become extremely useful here.

Comparing current conditions with earlier images may help you recognize changes that otherwise seem minor.

Check the Interior Again

Storm damage can exist even when the roof appears normal from the street.

Return indoors after significant weather and look at the same places you checked previously.

Check 16: Look for fresh water stains, moisture, drips, or damp attic areas.

Pay particular attention during the next rain. Some problems may only become noticeable once water begins moving across the roof again.



Document What Changed

Memory is unreliable, especially when you are dealing with storm clean up and other responsibilities.

> **Check 17:** Photograph visible damage from a safe location.

Take images showing both the wider area and the specific concern. Write down when you noticed it and what type of weather occurred beforehand.

These records can help you explain the situation clearly when speaking with a roofing professional.

Know When to Stop

A home inspection should never put you in danger.

Do not walk on a roof that is wet, steep, visibly damaged, or covered with loose materials. Avoid areas near damaged electrical equipment, fallen power lines, unstable trees, or questionable structural conditions.

You are gathering information.

The detailed inspection belongs to someone trained and equipped to perform it safely.

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Chapter 5: Know What to Do Next

Does Damage Mean You Need a New Roof?

Not necessarily.

One damaged section on an otherwise healthy roof may require a repair. A roof experiencing repeated leaks, widespread deterioration, significant storm damage, or problems beneath the visible surface may require a more extensive solution.

This is where homeowners can understandably become nervous.

You notice damage and immediately wonder whether you are about to hear that the entire roof must be replaced.

Instead of jumping to that conclusion, focus on gathering information.
The most useful question is not simply, “Do I see damage?”
Ask, “What is the condition of the roofing system as a whole?”

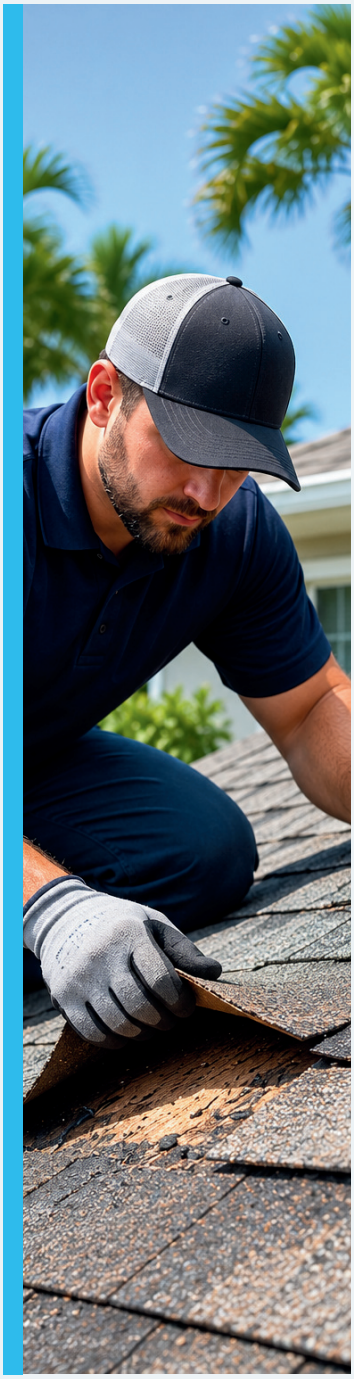
> **Check 18:** Review your photos, notes, repair history, and the locations of every concern you found.

Patterns matter. One stain may tell you something. Several stains appearing after every heavy rain tell you more.

> **Check 19:** Continue monitoring small concerns rather than forgetting about them.

Take another photo if a stain grows. Record whether moisture returns after rain. Notice whether a lifted shingle changes over time.

Asimple record canhelp turna vague concernintousefulinformation.



Know When to Call a Roofing Professional

Some situations deserve prompt professional attention.

Active leaks, missing roofing materials, visible sagging, repeated interior stains, substantial storm damage, or anything you cannot inspect safely should not be ignored.

> **Check 20:** Schedule a professional roof inspection when damage, leaks, or uncertainty remain.

A useful inspection should leave you with a clearer understanding of the roof's condition and the available next steps.

You should know what needs attention now, what may need attention later, and what can simply be monitored.

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Your 20 Point Florida Roof Inspection Checklist

1. Know the approximate age of your roof.
2. Look for changes after severe weather.
3. Track recurring leaks, stains, and repairs.
4. Save records from previous roofing work.
5. Look for missing shingles or tiles.
6. Check for cracked, curled, lifted, loose, or broken materials.
7. Study the roofline for sagging or uneven sections.
8. Check gutters and visible flashing.
9. Look for branches and debris near the roof.
10. Check ceilings and walls for stains.
11. Look for peeling paint or damp drywall.
12. Notice unusual musty odors or moisture.
13. Inspect accessible attic areas for staining or dampness.
14. Walk around the property after severe storms.
15. Look for fallen branches or impact damage.
16. Check the interior again for new water intrusion.
17. Photograph visible damage safely.
18. Review your inspection notes and photos.
19. Monitor concerns for changes over time.
20. Schedule a professional inspection when something remains uncertain.

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Protect the Home Under Your Roof

You don’t need professional roofing knowledge to become more aware of what is happening around your home.

You simply need to know what to notice.

A few minutes spent checking the exterior, looking inside, and documenting changes can help you recognize concerns earlier and make better decisions about what happens next.

If you discover roof damage, water intrusion, storm-related concerns, or anything you are unsure about, Dehlinger Roofing & Construction can evaluate the roof and help you understand your options.

Catch problems early. Get clear answers. Protect the home underneath your roof.