



Top 10 Things You Should Know Before Shingling Your Home

by Peter Sutton

1. Know who you're hiring.

Hire a roofer to do your roof. Hire a sidewall shingler to shingle the sides of your home. Roofing and sidewall shingling are two different trades, and require very different skills.

2. Find out if they're licensed to do the work.

The state of California has mandated that sidewall shingling requires its own licensure. Only general contractors, framers and sidewall shinglers are legally allowed to install shingles on the sides of homes. Before you hire someone, make sure they are appropriately licensed to do the work.

3. Make sure the shingler finds out about you and your home.

Estimating shingling isn't just about the adding up the number of square feet. There are also patterns, finishes and trims to consider. Exposure. Trouble spots. Plus your concerns. An experienced shingler will want to find out all he can up front, both to give you an accurate estimate of time and cost, and to make sure you have a clear idea of what will be involved in completing your job.

4. Investing a little more now could save you a bundle later.

There is no question: sidewall shingling a home is a significant expense. But don't cut corners on your shingling. Done correctly, sidewall shingles will protect a home for decades, looking beautiful even as they age. On the other hand, a bad shingling job can expose your home to weather and water damage, which may not be evident until real harm is done. Hiring a roofer

to do a sidewall shingler's job may save money initially; but the long term cost of repairs can far outweigh that advantage, and end up costing much more time, energy and money.

5. If your shingler doesn't recommend Western red cedar, ask why not.

The tight, straight grain of Western red cedar offers superior performance and durability, takes stains well, and offers a beautiful result. In addition, its natural oils offer natural resistance to insects. If your shingler suggests using another type of wood, make sure you ask for their reasons why -- and understand the difference it will make in looks and longevity.

6. Know what kind of shingles you're getting.

When it comes to shingles, there is a clear and visible difference between "good," "better" and "best." For uniformity, make sure your shingler is using premium grade shingles. A lesser grade of wood may look better on your bottom line; but you won't be happy with the way it looks on your home.



Instead of comparing prices, compare the quality of the work. When you compare Marin County Sidewall's approach and materials to other contractors, you'll see there is no comparison.

— Dr. Steve Katz



7. Know what to expect from your shingles' performance.

Extractives -- tannins, oils, resins -- are what gives wood both its beautiful aroma and its resistance to pests. Extractive bleeding can occur when the wood is exposed to water, leaving "tea stains" on the wood. This is a natural process, and one you should expect. If you'd rather your shingles not go through this natural weathering, ask your shingler about treating them with a stain-blocking finish.

8. Sidewall shingling is a great green choice.

Here's what forest ecologist Patrick Moore, co-founder of Greenpeace, says about using shingles: "As an environmentally friendly building product, wood is the clear leader. One of the most sustainable things about western red cedar is that when it is harvested, virtually 100% of it goes either to lumber, shakes & shingles, pulp & paper, or energy into mills that make these products. One of the great things about choosing shakes & shingles is that it makes you part of the renewable cycle using a product that is designed by Mother Nature."

9. Shingles are fire-safe.

Cedar shingles can be impregnated with fire-retardant that allows them to resist burning even under extraordinary conditions. Every situation is different, but chances are good you can have the shingled home you want without exposing your home to increased fire risk.

10. Experience matters.

Finally, and most importantly, when it comes to shingling, experience matters. Shingling is like putting the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle together -- and each one has to fit perfectly. Since each home is different, what works for one home may not work for another. It takes years of doing many different kinds of homes to reach the level of master shingler. Make sure the shinglers you choose are masters in their craft.

Marin County Sidewall is the Bay Area's premier sidewall shingling company. Founded and still headed by Peter Sutton in 1985, MCS's mission is to keep the art and craft of shingling alive.

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