**Roof repair tips**

While waiting for licensed contractors, there are temporary remedies for leaks. Before climbing onto the roof, know that it is easy to slip -particularly on wet tile - andthere is danger from tree branches, power lines and ladders.

Repairs are made from the outside. On the inside, set up buckets under leaky areas to relieve the water pressure. On the outside of the roof, you can use plastic sheeting or tar paper. The smallest holes may be patched by using a trowel to spread roofing cement over them.

**Plastic Sheeting**

This is the most temporary measure. Take heavy plastic sheets – a brand name is Visqueen – and use roofing nails to fasten them around the hole. If using two-by-fours, square off the hole with the wood first. Then wrap the plastic around the wood and nail down the wood.

If wood or nails are unavailable, use bricks, cement blocks or sandbags to hold down the plastic.

**Roofing Paper**

This is known as tar paper or roofing felt. Find it in the building materials sections of stores. It is applied with trowel-grade roofing cement and a trowel. The paper generally is sold in rolls by weight (15-, 30- and 90- weight paper are common) per 100 square feet. The paper is best applied in overlapping layers – alternating the cement and paper – from the bottom of the roof upward.

**Contractor Tips**

The National Roofing Contractors Association can help you find reputable roofing contractors. The Web site is [www.nrca.net](http://www.nrca.net). The NRCA offers these tips:

* Check for a permanent place of business, telephone number, tax identification number and occupational license. A professional will have these readily available.
* Check for a company with a good track record.
* Ask the contractor for proof of insurance. Insist on seeing copies of both liability coverage and workers’ compensation certificates.
* Find out if the contractor is bonded and licensed.
* Be sure the contractor can provide a manufacturer’s warranty. Beware of unrealistic, long-term warranties.
* Ask for a list of references and completed projects. Check with past customers to see if they were satisfied with the materials and workmanship.
* Call the Department of Business and Professional Regulation to check for complaints against a contractor. The DPR can be reached at 850-487-1395.
* Insist on a written proposal and examine it carefully before signing or paying any money.

**Spotting Roof Problems**

Resist the urge to get up on a ladder to take a closer look at your damaged roof. Leave that to a professional. Here’s some inspection advice:

* **From the Ground** – If you need a closer look, use binoculars. Look for torn or missing shingles and problems in the valleys – where two sloping sections join at an angle. Because water flows heavily in the valleys, they are especially vulnerable.
* **A Closer Look** – If you can’t see from a distance, wear non-slip, rubber soled shoes and use a firmly braced or tied-off ladder equipped with rubber safety feet.
* **Don’t Walk on the Roof** – You could dislodge the protective surface granules, diminishing waterproofing effectiveness. You also could fall off or through a weak, damaged roof. If you find large accumulations of shingle surface granules in the gutters, it doesn’t necessarily mean the roof needs to be replaced. A contractor should inspect the roof.

Tile roofs should be checked for cracked, missing or loose pieces of roofing material. For asphalt or wood-shingle roofs, look for protruding nails. On flat roofs, look for bare spots in the gravel surface and check for standing water.

Take a close look at the flashing on chimneys, vents, skylights, wall/roof junctions and other areas where the integrity of the roof may be compromised. Check television antennas and other add-ons to see if there are leaks that are a result of improper sealing of openings made in the roof.