



Wood Shingle Roof Treatments

Traditionally, wood roofs were treated in many cases with paint (evidence points to the most common colors being brown, red, and gray) or a turpentine / pine tar type of mixture. However, wood roofs today are typically installed with minimal – if any – protection.

In some instances the roof may benefit from a treatment of some sort – whether a fungicide or a preservative – to prolong the lifespan of the roof. Some communities require that wood roofs be treated with a fire retardant of some sort.

In 1986, the Forest Products Laboratory of the Texas Forest Service evaluated various waterborne and oil-borne treatments for wood shingle roofs. As this study is now over 20 years old, the products tested may no longer be commercially available. However, the study does provide additional information regarding the efficacy of wood shingle treatments.

Forest Products Laboratory, Texas Forest Service, “Treatments for Wood Shingle Roofs.” *Association for Preservation Technology, Bulletin* Vol. XXI No. 1 (1989): 13-15.

Guidelines for Roof Treatments:

If treatments are to be used:

- Determine the proper treatment for the roof.
- Determine the lifespan of the coating and commitment to the maintenance required to renew the coating; most need to be renewed every 4-5 years.
- Treat both sides of the shingle prior to installation to avoid unnecessary cupping of the shingle. Subsequent treatments may be applied *in situ*.
- Care should be taken to understand what chemicals are in the treatment that may react negatively with flashing materials, the shingle or the ground level landscape.
- The use of copper (lead coated copper if using western red cedar shingles) or zinc strips between courses (strips every 10 – 15’) is known to naturally cleanse the roof and inhibit biologic growth; however this often represents a detail change.