



technical bulletin

**Asphalt Roofing
Manufacturers Association**

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Reroofing: Tear-Off vs. Re-Cover

When the time has come to re-shingle an existing asphalt roof, one must decide whether to remove the old shingles, or apply the new ones right over the existing layer. There is no easy, universal answer. Although each roof must be evaluated individually, there are some general guidelines to help make an informed decision.

In most cases, it is not necessary to tear off the old shingles before applying the new ones. If a roof has only one layer of shingles, laying flat, and the decking is in good condition, a tear-off is not needed. Not only will the existing layer (although old and weathered) provide a secondary back-up roof for the new shingles, but it will also save the cost and inconvenience of removing and disposing of the old shingles. It is suggested that before making a final decision, a check be made with local officials to ensure that all local building codes are being followed. In either case, adequate roof ventilation should be allowed for. Refer to ARMA's technical bulletin #209-RR-86, "*Ventilation and Moisture Control for Residential Roofing*," for additional information.

The existing shingles will probably have to be removed if:

- An inspection of the deck reveals rotted or warped wood, or large gaps between the deck boards. Any rotten or damaged boards must be replaced before applying the new shingles. (Note: for best roof performance, consider re-decking "board" roof decks with a layer of APA approved 1/2" plywood, before applying the shingles.)
- There are more than two layers of existing shingles on the roof. It should be verified that the roof will support the weight of three layers of shingles.
- The roof structure shows signs of sag across the ridge or truss lines. If the roof does not look straight and feel solid, have the structure professionally inspected to check for structural defects.
- The condition of the existing shingles is so rough and distorted that it would not be practical to flatten all raised areas enough for the new roof to lay flat.

Note: These recommendations were prepared by and have the approval of the Asphalt Roofing Manufacturers Association for informational purposes only. They are not intended to revoke or change the requirements or specifications of the individual roofing material manufacturers or local, state and federal building officials that have jurisdiction in your area. Any question, or inquiry, as to the requirements, or specifications of a manufacturer, should be directed to the roofing manufacturer concerned.