

“Up On Top” News

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The Proper Way To Repair Your Roof-Part I

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Sustainability of roofing systems requires that the systems be repairable. Any roof system can be punctured if the impact is great enough. Repair materials need to be compatible with the roof system in place; that, in turn, requires the building manager to know what's over head.

Commercial (low-slope) roof systems can be classified as:

- Bituminous built-up, using asphalt or coal tar pitch
- Bituminous polymer-modified systems
- Sprayed-in-place polyurethane foam with coating
- Single-ply non-bituminous
- Weldable thermoplastics
- Non-weldable elastomeric
- Metal roof systems

Proper repair requires that you know what roof system is in place so that you use the appropriate materials.

BITUMINOUS BUILT-UP ROOFING SYSTEMS

The traditional built-up roof consists of multiple layers of bitumen-saturated roofing felts glued to one another with bitumen, with a “flood-coat” of more bitumen into which roofing aggregate has been embedded.

When possible, repairs should be made with compatible materials. Asphalt mastic is common and is readily available.

Start the repair by scraping away the existing aggregate and surfacing, generally extending at least 6 inches in each direction beyond the damaged roof membrane. Prime the existing scraped surface to enhance the bond, apply a layer of asphalt mastic, reinforce it with woven mesh, and apply an additional layer of asphalt mastic. Reapply loose aggregate as a final topping.

POLYMER-MODIFIED BITUMINOUS MATERIALS

These systems can be considered “high-performance” bituminous roofs. They gen-

erally consist of reinforcing, heavily coated with SBS or APP modified bitumen, rather than ply sheets impregnated or lightly coated with asphalt or coal tar bitumen as used in BUR systems.

MB grades include sheets that can be hot mopped (SBS), fused together using a torch (APP), applied in solvent-based adhesives, or in some cases, may be self-adhered by removal of a backer sheet. For repair work, the torch-grades are desirable since the heat helps evaporate surface water and re-melts the substrate to embed dirt and/or loose roofing granules. Like materials should be used for MB repairs, i.e. SBS MB sheets should be used for SBS repairs and APP MB sheets used for APP repairs. Asphalt primer is recommended with self-adhered, mastic, and hot-applied patches.

Part II in May issue – Repairs to SPF, Single Ply, and metal roof systems.