

CONSTRUCTION CONNECTION

A construction defect informational newsletter for past, present and future clients of Anderson & Kriger

First Quarter 2003 – Defect Profile: Roof

Your Home's Roof

ALL THAT STANDS BETWEEN YOU AND THE WEATHER



by Catherine Benton
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Many Californians strive to achieve the American dream of owning a home because ownership can provide long term financial security and stability for your family. But few recognize that homes are complex systems with many separate components which must work together to keep the occupants safe, dry and secure. One in particular, the roof, is all that stands between a homeowner and the sometimes harsh elements of wind, rain or snow.



Poorly installed rake tiles and debris indicate potential problems

stains on ceilings, walls, carpeting and furnishings. In extreme cases, water from roof leaks can cause rotting to wood framing and mold growth inside walls or attic areas.

Two years ago, Tom and Marcia Stinnett purchased their home in Live Oak, California. They were thrilled to find an affordable new home in the cozy small town. "That's one nice thing about this place – the wonderful people. You just don't get that everywhere," said Tom, adding that he was "excited about raising his children in the small quiet community."

The Stinnett family moved into their home in the summer of 2000. When the first winter storm of the year hit the small community,

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Defects revealed thru investigative tests

The roof of a home, working in conjunction with the windows and walls, is what separates you from the outside elements. If the roof leaks or fails it can have devastating effects on

the rest of the home and on the occupants. When problems do occur, owners of newer homes expect the developer to come forward and help resolve the problem. Occasionally, however, that trust is misplaced and owners can be left, literally, cold and wet.

The top of a house is much more than just the tiles or shingles you can see from the outside. A roof is a system composed of wood trusses, normally hidden from view, which help create the architectural outline of the home. But more importantly, the trusses form the foundation for the weatherproofing to keep the elements out. On top of the trusses is attached sheathing, the roofing felt, tile or shingles, as well as plumbing vent jacks, flashing, chimneys and other components. All of these components work together to ensure the weather stays out and the house stays dry.

If something goes wrong during the construction of the roof system it often shows up as

Tips for Maintaining a Healthy Roof

If you see a problem with your roof, you should call an expert to help you assess your needs. You should also avoid walking on the roof whenever possible. However, the following is a list of places to check which can often help identify a problem early on.

1. Survey your roof visually from the ground. Each row of tiles or shingles should be even. Look for any missing, "slipped" or damaged tiles or shingles. Replace any missing tiles or shingles as soon as possible to avoid damage to the waterproofing and sheathing below.
2. Take a look around your attic. Make note of any damp or water-damaged timbers in the roof structure and look for any stains on wood framing or insulation.
3. Make sure that the vents in the eaves are not covered with insulation. They allow air to circulate through the attic.
4. It may be necessary to cement down the edges of any "curled" shingles.
5. Look for stains under the eaves and behind the trim in areas where the roof overhangs an exterior wall. Water in these areas is often the result of problems higher up the slope of the roof.
6. If you are not comfortable with climbing onto your roof do not hesitate to call a professional roofer.



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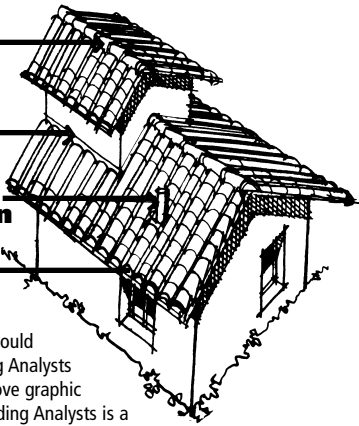
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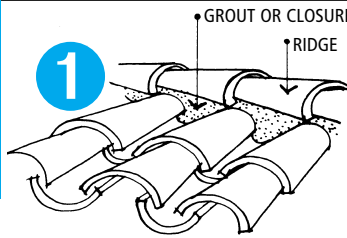
Why Some Roofs Leak

There are four common problem areas in the construction of tile roofs:

- 1 — Ridge
- 2 — Headwall
- 3 — Penetration
- 4 — Eaves

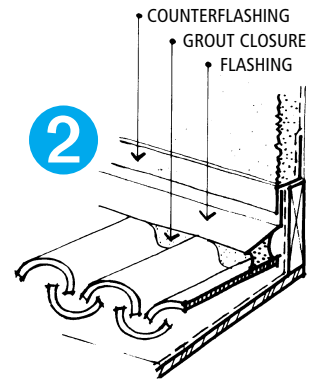


Anderson & Kriger would like to thank Building Analysts for providing the above graphic representations. Building Analysts is a full-service architectural and engineering firm, offering services including architectural and structural investigations, repair recommendations and expert testimony.



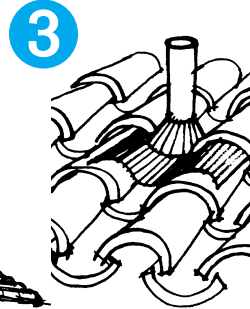
The ridge of the tile roof is left open to rain.

The National Roofing Contractors Association and most manufacturers recommend that grout or other closure device be used to seal this exposed location.



Open headwalls can be a source of leaks in a driving rain.

Flashing and counterflashing as well as a grout closure are critical to provide a weathertight seal.

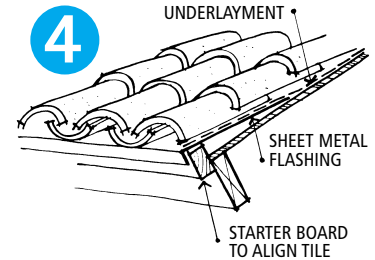


Roof penetrations installed without flexible flashing.

The principal concept is to make sure that any flashing is flexible enough to be "shingled" (lapped) onto the tile assembly.

Eaves should shed water, not collect water.

Any water that gets under the tile surface should have a way to shed off the roof at the tile eaves rather than being dammed at the roof edge. Consult manufacturer's recommendations for the specific tile product. One method is shown at right.



Your Home's Roof

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Mr. Stinnett noticed several of the homes in the neighborhood were missing shingles. He also began to notice moisture collecting around many of the windows of his home. He was not sure if there was a problem with his home so he contacted his builder to ask some questions. Unfortunately, he did not receive the help that he expected to get.

"I felt alone and frustrated," Mr. Stinnett explained. He sent a letter to the developer stating that he wanted to get the issues resolved without filing a law suit, but received no adequate response. He then turned to several different agencies, including the City Building Department and the Contractors State License Board, in an attempt to get help resolving the issues with his home. While they offered sympathy, they could do little to force a developer to return and make repairs.

Each storm which passed through the community during the winter of 2001-02 did more damage to the homes. Afterward, neighbors would help one another make repairs and replace missing shingles. The homeowners began to question whether this should be happening and continued to attempt to contact the builder to get help. Most received little or no response and none of them felt satisfied with the builder's efforts.

Many of the homeowners were surprised by this lack of response. "If you run a busi-

ness you have to be somewhat customer oriented. I don't get how you can treat people like this and expect to stay in business" proclaims Stinnett. "I bought this house on good faith. I don't feel the builder has responded to issues like he should. He was really nice until you purchased the house."

Finally, Mr. Stinnett contacted Anderson & Kriger. "I have never sued anyone in my life," said Stinnett. "This was a really hard one to choke down for me. It was a moral issue for me. I feel like I was left with no other options, but, I simply wasn't getting help anywhere else."

Representatives from A&K's Sacramento office visited the Stinnett family home and inspected the various areas of concern. Soon after a letter was sent to other homeowners in the development asking if they were experiencing similar problems, over half of the homeowners contacted A&K looking for help and complaining of comparable issues.

In February 2002 a lawsuit was filed on behalf of the owners of approximately 40 homes in the development.

Although the case is pending, the first winter storms of 2002 caused additional damage to the homes. "The wind peels the roofs right off. It just takes the shingles off like dominoes," Mr. Stinnett explains. "Several of the roofs in the development were stripped right down to the plywood sheathing. Every time the wind blows I go outside and look at my roof. After the last storm I drove through other neighbor-

hoods in town just to see if their shingles were coming off. They weren't. This is the only place where its happening."

But the news is not all bad. Commenting recently, Stinnett said "neighbors keep coming up to me to tell me what is happening to their homes. The neighborhood is actually pulling together. We are talking to one another and finding that we all have the same story to tell. I am not alone, everybody has the same story and we're working together to help each other out."

The lawsuit involving Tom and Marcia Stinnett, and their neighbors, is moving forward. Attorneys for the builder, as well as for the subcontractors who did the actual work of construction, have been located and are appearing in the case. The court has also ordered the parties to attempt to resolve the case by early summer and, if mediation does not work, it is expected the court will set a trial date for later in the year.

Like many of our clients Mr. Stinnett says, "I just wanted to get my house fixed. But, when the developer refused to help, I saw little option."

Whether the problems lie in the roof over your head or any of the other complex components that make up your home, Anderson & Kriger prides itself on having helped thousands of homeowners protect the value of their homes when developers can not, or will not, stand behind the products they sell.