

➤ Cement Asbestos Roof Shingles

Rated Life

Under normal conditions, and assuming proper repairs and maintenance are performed, these roofs have a life expectancy of 30 years. We have found some lasting considerably longer with good maintenance.

Compared with alternative roofing materials, these shingles have a medium in-place cost and medium durability with occasional maintenance required. Fire rating is class A or B. When required, replacement involves significant expense, possibly with extra costs involved in proper disposal of the old cement-asbestos materials.

Wear Signs

Some things to watch for include:

- Broken shingles, possibly leaving exposed openings or nails
- Missing shingles, possibly leaving exposed openings or nails
- Prior repairs using tar or flashing cement—not a durable remedy
- Moss growing on the roof; can be reduced using industrial cleaners and removed by careful work, but usually left in place if shingles are old, as too much traffic on the roof damages more shingles than it fixes.
- Mildew or staining; possibly can be reduced using spray or light brushing with mildewicide or industrial cleaner. This might be mostly a cosmetic concern.
- Evidence of active leaks in the living area/attic
- Evidence of prior leaks in the living area/attic

Maintenance Tips

We consider these shingles a possible asset, but they have to be repaired with the same degree of care and knowledge as for slate roofs - perhaps costing more than other materials, and perhaps lasting longer as well. Work by an inexperienced contractor can ruin this material and lead to complete roof failure. Small repairs to individual shingles can be made using copper flashing material—it will often weather to a less noticeable color than other substitutes. Follow slate-roof repair procedures.

Environmental Issues

The asbestos in this material is not friable under normal conditions. That is, it is not normally easily crushed into dust by hand. However very worn shingles or shingles mishandled during demolition may create asbestos dust which could be a health and environmental hazard. Also, in some municipalities special measures and added costs are involved in removing and disposing of these materials.

Shingle Sources

One manufacturer of cement-asbestos shingles was the Ruberoid Co. who made 8" x 16" tapered shingles with a surface pattern resembling wood and called "Ru-Ber-Oid-Eternit Tapered Timbertex Asbestos-Cement Shingles." 260 shingles/525 lbs./square, were available in a range of colors. Other manufacturers make shingles which resemble the originals in appearance, fire rating, and durability, but without asbestos.

For maintenance or replacement information contact Supradur Manufacturing Corporation, PO Box 908, Rye, NY 10580 800-223-1948 or in New York 914/967-8230. Ask about their Supradur® mineral fiber shingles. For handling and disposal of old roofing material contact the US EPA, US DEC, or your local health department.