



Don't Ignore Roofing Maintenance When Budgets Are Tight

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In today's economy, many organizations are looking for ways to save money. In light of the current economic situation, company executives have the unenviable task of deciding which programs to downsize and which projects to delay or eliminate. Security programs are not immune to these cost-cutting decisions and in many instances are among the first programs considered for cost-saving.

In these times of economic uncertainty, delaying a costly roof replacement project may not only be desired, it may be a financial necessity. Tough times call for innovative and proactive thinking in regards to the roof system. As the economic downturn squeezes budgets, facility executives should reassess their long-term goals and short-term needs in regards to their facilities' roofing systems.

Roofs fail for many reasons; the sad part is that many fail years before they should. The causes of premature roof failure include poor design, poor materials, poor installation, lack of maintenance, natural causes, man-made concerns (e.g., material defects, incorrect or lack of response to roof problems), tenant abuse, change in building use, building component failure due to incompatibility of components, and rooftop traffic by other trades. Proactive roof maintenance can often detect early signs of failing components and allow time to mitigate the concerns and increase the roof's service life.

Now, more than ever, facility executives should think about their roof maintenance program to try to extend the life of the roof. All roof systems require maintenance. In fact, most roof warranties require it, so failure to do so may void the warranty, bring about an early demise of the roof and result in unwanted moisture intrusion, production and work stoppages, and upset building owners. In addition to preventing the premature or untimely demise of the roof system, maintenance will extend the service life of the roof, thus promoting a key element of sustainability: long service life.

In many cases, roof systems protect 95 percent of a building owner's assets, yet they are a relatively fragile component of a building. The roof system often is subjected to wind, hail, snow, rain and ultraviolet energy, as well as foot traffic and various forms of abuse from mechanical equipment. While many other building components are more visible and, therefore, tend to be maintained on a regular basis, a roof system often is overlooked.

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Leading causes of premature roof system failure include poor roof design and installation, neglect of proper maintenance and lack of appropriate repairs. Properly maintaining the roof can extend the service life, thus deferring costly roof replacement. This can allow time for financial planning for future replacement. It also helps ensure that there are no roof-related interruptions to the building occupants, which is more important than ever given pressure on organizations to survive in these tough financial times.