

## Tips for Extending the Life of Wood Shake or Shingle Roof Covering

### *Material Selection & Appropriate Finishes:*

Choose a wood that has natural durability or resistance to decay. The most common type used is Western Redcedar. Another option is using wood that has been treated. All wood is subject to weathering, erosion from sun, wind, debris and precipitation. Weathering can be slowed by treatments or finishes. Finishes reduce weathering and decay, but it should be noted that they can increase flammability. Film-forming finishes like paint or solid color stains should NEVER be used. They do not allow for shrink/swelling and will crack, allowing water to enter and cause further damage. Semitransparent penetrating oil-based stains are the best finishes. They use a wood preservative and a water-repellent. Water-repellent preservatives alone can be used, but are not as long lasting as semitransparent stains. Finishes are more effective if they are applied to the shingle before being installed on the roof.



### *Use Proper Installation Methods:*

The underlying asphalt felt is a secondary barrier for moisture penetration, but it also prevents the shingles from drying out quickly. Wet shingles allow wood-decaying fungi to grow. It is best to create an airspace between the shingle and felt. Be sure that there is adequate attic ventilation. Using zinc, galvanized or copper flashings naturally prevents moss, mold and mildew from accumulating.

### *Perform Routine Maintenance:*

Regular maintenance will extend the life of the roof. Remove leaves and debris from the roof surface, because they trap moisture and increase shingle decay. Overhanging branches that continually shade the roof can also prevent the shingles from drying. Do not let branches scrape against the surface. This will create grooves and can loosen fasteners. If your roof has moss or lichen, use a chemical treatment to clean the surface.

### *Chemical Treatments:*

When using any chemical treatment, follow the manufacturer's directions, use protective clothing and shield the surrounding vegetation. Cleaning solutions or bleaching formulations are used to remove dirt, stains or light mold and mildew. Chemical solutions will kill excessive mold growth, while preservative chemical solutions will slow future growth and wood rot. Pigments or ultraviolet absorbers can be used to protect the shingles from sun damage. Oil treatments are not recommended because the benefits are only temporary, the oil may be an additional food source for mold, and the oil increases flammability of the roof.

**This is a general guideline only. Always check manufacturer's specifications and local building codes before modifying or replacing your roof. Exercise caution when working on a roof.**

These tips were summarized from the following articles:

*Wood Shakes and Shingles for Roof Applications - Tips for Longer Life*  
US Forest Service Forest Products Laboratory  
<http://www.fpl.fs.fed.us/documnts/finlines/knaeb98d.pdf>

*Care and Maintenance of Wood Shingle and Shake Roofs*  
Oregon State University Extension Service  
[http://owic.oregonstate.edu/pubs/shake\\_roof\\_maintenance.pdf](http://owic.oregonstate.edu/pubs/shake_roof_maintenance.pdf)