

What to Expect from a New Roof Installation in Austin, Texas

If you are building a new home, adding an addition, or putting up an ADU or accessory building in Austin, Texas, one of the big decisions you will face is the roof. A new roof installation Austin job is not something you do every year, and it pays to get it right the first time. The climate here is unique, with long hot summers, sudden downpours, and the occasional freeze. That means the materials, the underlayment, and the ventilation all need to be chosen with local conditions in mind. I have been around roofing work in Central Texas for a while, and I have seen what holds up and what does not.

This article covers what a homeowner or small builder should think about when planning a new roof installation Austin, from permits to shingles to the crew that does the work. I am not going to give you a sales pitch for any one company. I will give you the practical details that help you ask the right questions and avoid the common mistakes that lead to leaks, high energy bills, or a roof that needs replacing long before it should.

Start with the Building Permit and Local Codes

Before any shingles go on, you need a building permit. In Austin, the city has specific requirements for roof construction, especially for new construction and additions. The permit process ensures that the roof structure can handle the wind loads we get during spring storms and that the roof covering meets fire resistance standards. Skipping the permit is a bad idea. It can cause problems when you sell the house, and it might mean the work does not pass inspection, forcing you to tear off a brand new roof.

I have talked to homeowners who thought a permit was optional for an accessory building or a small ADU. It is not. The city requires permits for any structure with a roof, even a detached garage or a workshop. The permit fee is a small cost compared to the headache of fixing unpermitted work later. A good roofing contractor will handle the permit application as part of the job. If they act like you do not need one, that is a red flag.

Choosing Roofing Materials for the Austin Climate

The material you choose for your roof affects how long it lasts, how much it costs, and how much energy your home uses. Let us look at the main options you will see around town.

Asphalt Shingles

Asphalt shingles, also called composition shingles, are the most common residential roofing material in Austin. They are affordable, come in many colors, and install fairly quickly. But not

all asphalt shingles are the same. The cheap ones can curl, crack, or lose granules in five to ten years under the Texas sun. I recommend spending a little more for architectural shingles, which are thicker and have a longer warranty. They resist wind better and look more like real slate or wood. If you plan to stay in the house for more than a decade, the upgrade is worth it.

Metal Roofing

Metal roofing is becoming more popular in Austin, especially for modern homes, ADUs, and accessory buildings. It lasts a long time, sheds rain well, and can be energy-efficient if you choose a cool roof color. A cool roof reflects more sunlight and absorbs less heat, which helps lower your air conditioning bills in the summer. Austin Energy offers rebates for certain cool roof products, so ask your contractor if the metal panels qualify. The downside is that metal can be noisy in a hailstorm, and it dents more easily than shingles. Also, metal roofing needs proper roof underlayment and ventilation to prevent condensation underneath. If the installer skips the underlayment or uses the wrong type, you can get rust from the inside out.

Other Options

Tile and slate are beautiful but heavy and expensive. They require a reinforced roof structure and skilled labor. For most Austin homes, tile is overkill unless you are going for a specific look. I have seen tile roofs on high-end custom homes, but for a standard new construction or addition, asphalt or metal make more sense.

Underlayment, Ventilation, and Flashing

What goes under the shingles matters as much as what goes on top. The roof underlayment is a waterproof layer that protects the deck if wind drives rain under the shingles or if ice dams form along the eaves. In Austin, we do not get much snow, but we get heavy rain from the south. A good synthetic underlayment is better than old-school felt, because it does not tear as easily and handles high heat better.

Roof ventilation is another factor that many people overlook. An unventilated roof traps heat and moisture in the attic. That heat radiates into the living space and makes your AC work harder. It also shortens the life of the shingles. Proper ventilation uses intake vents at the eaves (often part of a drip edge) and exhaust vents at the ridge, called a ridge vent. The ridge vent runs along the peak and lets hot air escape. I have seen houses where the ridge vent was blocked by shingles or insulation, and the roof deck rotted after a few years. Check that your roofing contractor includes ventilation in the scope of work.

Roof flashing is the metal or plastic pieces that seal the joints where the roof meets a wall, a chimney, or a skylight. Flashing is a common failure point. If the flashing is not installed correctly, water runs behind it and into the wall. In Austin, we get wind-driven rain from the

south and east, so pay attention to those sides. Flashing should be integrated with the underlayment, not just caulked on top. Caulk dries out and cracks in the sun. Mechanical flashing with counter-flashing is more reliable.

Energy Considerations and the Cool Roof

Austin Energy has a program that encourages homeowners to build energy-efficient homes. If you are doing a [new roof installation Austin](#), talk to your contractor about cool roof materials. A cool roof is rated by the Energy Star program and has a high solar reflectance. It stays cooler in the sun, which reduces the heat that transfers into your attic. That can lower your electric bill by a noticeable amount, especially in July and August. Some cool roof shingles and metal panels also qualify for a rebate from Austin Energy. The rebate is not huge, but it helps offset the cost of better materials.

The roof is the largest surface of your home that faces the sun. Making it reflective is one of the smartest investments you can make for comfort and energy savings. Even if you do not go for a full cool roof, choose light-colored shingles over dark ones. Dark shingles can reach 170 degrees Fahrenheit on a summer afternoon. Lighter colors stay 20 to 30 degrees cooler.

Finding the Right Roofing Contractor

Not every roofing contractor in Austin is the same. Some specialize in new construction and work with production builders. Others focus on reroofs and repairs. For a new roof installation Austin on a new house or an ADU, you want a contractor who has experience with new construction, not just tear-offs. New construction means the roof deck is fresh, and the roofer coordinates with the framer, the siding installer, and the HVAC crew. It helps if the roofer is certified by a manufacturer like GAF, because that certification means they have been trained on proper installation methods and can offer a better roof warranty.

A GAF-certified roofer, for example, can provide a system warranty that covers the shingles, the underlayment, and the accessories like drip edge and ridge vent. That kind of warranty protects you if something fails. Without it, you might have to chase the shingle manufacturer for the material and the roofer for the labor. A single-source warranty is simpler.

When you interview contractors, ask for proof of insurance, workers compensation, and a written contract that includes the materials, the timeline, and the payment schedule. Do not pay the full amount upfront. A typical schedule is a deposit to start, a progress payment when the underlayment is down, and the balance on completion. Also, ask if they pull the building permit themselves. If they say the permit is your responsibility, that is a warning sign.

What a Roof Warranty Should Cover

A roof warranty is not just a piece of paper. It tells you how long the contractor stands behind their work and what they will do if something goes wrong. For a new roof installation Austin, look for a warranty that covers both materials and labor for at least ten years. Some manufacturers offer 25-year or 50-year warranties on the shingles, but those often have fine print. They may not cover installation errors, which are the most common cause of leaks. A contractor who offers a system warranty from a manufacturer like GAF is giving you better protection than one who just hands you a shingle warranty card.

Also, check if the warranty is transferable. If you sell the house in a few years, a transferable warranty is a selling point. It tells the next owner that the roof was installed by a qualified contractor and has years of coverage left.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

I have seen a few mistakes over the years that cause trouble down the road. Here are the main ones:

- **Skimping on underlayment.** Using cheap felt or skipping the underlayment on low-slope areas. This leads to leaks when wind drives rain sideways.
- **Ignoring ventilation.** Blocking the ridge vent or not installing intake vents at the drip edge. The attic gets hot and humid, and the roof deck rots.
- **Poor flashing details.** Caulking instead of using metal flashing at walls and penetrations. The caulk fails in a few years, and water gets in.
- **Hiring unlicensed labor.** A roofer who does not pull permits or carry insurance. If someone gets hurt on your property, you could be liable.
- **Choosing the cheapest shingles.** They may look fine when new, but the Texas sun will fade and crack them quickly. Pay a little more for architectural shingles with a longer warranty.

Planning the Timeline

A new roof installation Austin on a typical house takes a few days to a week, depending on the size and complexity. The weather is a factor. Spring and fall are the best times, because the temperatures are mild and rain is less frequent. Summer is fine, but the heat can slow the crew down and affect how the shingles seal. Winter is okay as long as the temperature is above 40 degrees when the asphalt shingles are installed. If it is too cold, the shingles will not seal properly.

If you are building a new home, coordinate with the general contractor so the roof is dried in before the rough-in electrical and plumbing. That keeps the interior dry and allows the other

trades to work without weather delays. For an ADU or accessory building, the timeline is shorter, but the same principles apply.

Final Thoughts

A roof is a big investment, but it is also one of the most important parts of your home. Taking the time to choose the right materials, hire a qualified contractor, and get the details right will save you money and stress for decades. The Austin climate is tough on roofs, but with the right approach, you can have a roof that lasts, looks good, and helps keep your home comfortable. Whether you are building a new house, an ADU, or a garage, the same rules apply: get the permit, use good materials, insist on proper underlayment and ventilation, and work with a contractor who stands behind their work.