

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Is Your Roof Ready For Winter?

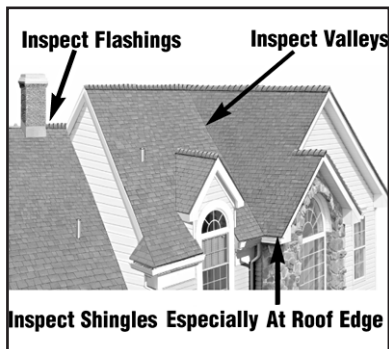
(NAPSA)—When looking to protect your home against outside elements, it's a good idea to start at the top. That's because your roof is your home's first line of defense against the high winds, heavy rains, sleet and snow that occur in winter. Roofing contractors offer these suggestions:

- To avoid serious damage, and unnecessary expenses, it's a good idea to inspect your roof before and after winter. Roof inspections can catch potential problems before they can lead to extensive damage. Once water starts moving beyond your roof you will most likely need more than roof repairs to recover from the damage.

- To help prevent leaks, moisture seepage, and decay problems, check the "weak" points of your roof. Look for holes, tears or buckling in the flashings (pieces of metal used to seal any penetration) around roof stacks, vents, skylights, chimneys, and any other roof penetrations. Contractors estimate that more than 90 percent of roofing leaks occur in these areas.

- Next, visually inspect your roof for any damaged, loose or missing shingles, or any blistering or buckling of the shingles.

- Finally, check the roof edge where it is more susceptible to wind, driving rain and ice dams (when water freezes and backs up under the roofing system), and make sure shingles are firmly



ROOFING REPAIRS can be lowered when an effective maintenance program is in place.

secured and sealed to the roof. Inspect and clean gutters, leaders, window wells, and drains of all leaves and debris, and make sure gutters are firmly secured to the house. Direct downspouts away from the house foundation and clean them of any debris.

A home is a major investment, and so is the roof. At approximately 10 percent to 30 percent of the cost of a new roof, an effective maintenance program done by a professional roofing contractor will save you costly repairs and prolong the useful life of the roof system. A free service that helps homeowners find a qualified roofing contractor is available through GAF Materials Corporation, North America's largest roofing manufacturer. Simply call 1-888-LEAK-SOS or visit www.gaf.com.