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ROOFING › COATINGS › INSULATION › SOLAR

**W H I T E P A P E R**

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## **REPLACE OR RE-ROOF?**

Making the right choice for your building and your budget.



## Why re-roofing is all the rage.

Sooner or later, every commercial property owner receives the unsettling news: your aging roof isn't going to make it through another year. If you haven't yet faced this issue, you will. And you'll need to choose between replacing (removing your existing roof and constructing a new roof in its place) and re-roofing (installing a new roof on top of your existing roof).

It's easy to understand why most building owners opt for re-roofing. Compared to the economic impact of tearing-off the old roofing system and installing the new roof (not to mention the environmental impact of dealing with the tear-off waste at the landfill), re-roofing is almost always the most cost-efficient way to give new life to an old roof.

## The sky's the limit.

Re-roofing options are plentiful, giving you a great deal of flexibility in finding the best choice for your particular building and budget.

If your budget is especially tight and you need the least-expensive way to keep a roof over your building, perhaps installing a simple single-ply roof over your existing roof is the best solution.

On the other hand, if you're more concerned with long-term value and reducing energy costs with superior insulative properties, re-roofing with spray polyurethane foam (SPF) might be your answer. (SPF has an R-value of 6.5 per inch of coating, and can be applied over and over again as desired.)

If you're ready to upgrade to the benefits of a cool roof while adding the longest lifespan and lowest maintenance requirements to your existing roof, re-roofing with a silicone system is likely what you're looking for.

The point is: depending on your goals, your funds and the type and condition of your current roofing system, there's a re-roofing solution available to meet your needs.

## Re-roofing pros & cons.

As stated previously, re-roofing involves minimal tear-off compared to roof replacement, and that's the basis for all of its key benefits:

### Pros

- Your location
- The size, pitch and condition of your current roof
- The number of penetrations (where the roof meets a vertical surface)
- The roofing system you want installed
- Your desired R-value (if any)
- Your desired modifications (if any)

## Cons

- Conditional eligibility: If the existing roof is in extremely poor condition, re-roofing on top of it would not be practical or beneficial.
- Legal eligibility: Building codes are constantly evolving and, in many areas, becoming more restrictive, limiting the number of buildings eligible for re-roofing.

A tip to consider relative to legal eligibility: If you are in an area that limits the number of roofing systems allowed on a commercial building, and your existing roof is already at that number, ask your roofing contractor about a silicone re-roofing system. In many cases, a silicone coating is considered “maintenance” rather than re-roofing and is permitted – even on roofs that are at the maximum number of systems allowed.

## Dollars and sense.

What can you expect to pay for re-roofing your commercial building? It's beyond the scope of this article to cover all the potential variables that go into calculating the answer, but some of them include:

- Your location
- The size, pitch and condition of your current roof
- The number of penetrations (where the roof meets a vertical surface)
- The roofing system you want installed
- Your desired R-value (if any)
- Your desired modifications (if any)

A relatively flat, single-ply roof with few penetrations would likely be most cost-effective to re-roof with another single-ply roofing system. On the other hand, if that same roof had hundreds of penetrations, it might be more affordable to re-roof with SPF which applies very easily around penetrations.

While pricing will vary between different regions of the country and different roofing contractors, in general, re-roofing will almost always be a more economical option than roof replacement.

The bottom line: talk to a licensed commercial roofing contractor in your market about your unique building situation. They should ask questions, offer recommendations and work with you toward a custom solution that's specifically tailored to meet your needs.



2671 S. Cherry Avenue  
Fresno, California 93706  
559.233.1680 office  
559.233.1685 fax  
877.233.2003 toll free

[www.BarrierRoofing.com](http://www.BarrierRoofing.com)  
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