



technical bulletin

**Asphalt Roofing
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Use of Asphalt Shingle Underlayment

There are three basic types of underlayment used under asphalt shingles: asphalt-saturated felt, self-adhering underlayment, and non-asphaltic synthetics (polymers). The most common type of asphalt shingle underlayment is asphalt-saturated felt. There are a number of important reasons for installing underlayment on wood decks before asphalt shingle application. Among them are the following:

- Using the appropriate underlayment along with the proper roof deck material and asphalt shingles will ensure the required roof assembly fire-resistance classification, such as Class A, Class B and Class C, is met. An asphalt shingle by itself is not classified for fire-resistance, although it is a part of the fire-resistance-classified roofing assembly. In many municipalities, a Class A, B, or C fire rating is required by code or ordinance for all roofing assemblies.
- Asphalt shingle manufacturers direct the application of underlayment over wood roof decks.
- Underlayment helps protect the roof deck until asphalt shingle application is completed.
- Underlayment is water resistant. It provides secondary protection for the roof deck from wind-driven rain and other moisture penetrations.
- Installing underlayment helps minimize “picture framing,” which is the visible outline of roof deck panels caused by irregularities in roof deck panel thickness or moisture migration at the roof deck joints that may telegraph through asphalt shingles.
- Asphalt shingle underlayment helps protect the asphalt shingles from resins that may come from the wood roof deck.
- The use of laboratory tested asphalt shingle underlayment products complying with ASTM D226, D4869 and/or D6757 is recommended and may be required by the asphalt shingle manufacturer and/or building codes. Local building codes may have different or additional requirements for types of underlayment. The use of ASTM D1970 self-adhering underlayment may comply with manufacturer’s instructions and local building codes.

Follow printed instructions for application provided with the asphalt shingles and/or asphalt shingle underlayment to ensure optimum performance of the asphalt shingle underlayment and the asphalt shingle roof system.

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