

Regional Concerns Features

Cedar Roof Shingles

The preference for one roofing material over another is often related to local architectural styles. However, the durability of a roofing material is more a matter of climate and vegetation. In areas where coniferous forests are common, pine needles can cause a roof to fail prematurely. This is because needles trap moisture and prevents the roofing from drying after a rain. Also, pine needles are not easily blown off a roof by wind. In areas where deciduous forests are common, leaves and other debris dropped on a roof by nearby trees can collect into piles that hold moisture against the roof. However, it is more likely that wind will remove the leaves before they become a problem.

Weather Protection for Windows

Houses in coastal regions, particularly near the Gulf and along the eastern seaboard, should be build to standards that help reduce storm damage. Windblown debris is often the chief hazard in severe storms. This is because shattered glass invites wind and water into the house. Professionally designed and installed hurricane shutters are effective but costly. Home made storm panels are less expensive, though also less convenient. Plywood panels have 30% greater impact strength than OSB. Insurance industry groups recommend that panels be at least 5/8 in. thick plywood, but thicker panels are even better.

Flat Roofs

In most parts of the US, a pitched roof is about the only type of roof you will find. This is because it easily sheds rain and snow. However, in the Southwest you will find some houses with a flat roof. This is due in part to the influence of Pueblo Indian culture, and to the fact that rain and snow are less common in desert areas.

Chimney Diverters

At the top of many coastal chimneys is a simple device, made of sheet metal, that pivots automatically to shield the windward side of the chimney while exposing the leeward side. This helps to prevent smoke from being driven back down the chimney by wind gusts. This is a common feature of chimneys in Oregon and Washington. In coastal New England, the same problem is typically solved in a different way. The chimney is topped with a bluestone slab that sits atop four short pilasters (rectangular columns). The slab prevents wind from blowing smoke straight down the chimney.