

**How-To
CLINICS**

HURRICANE READINESS



**Prepare your home.
Protect your family.**

How To Tarp a Roof

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Following a hurricane, the essential next step in the recovery process is the stabilization of your home to stop further damage and to prepare to rebuild.

Tarping a damaged roof is the critical action that preserves the option for future rebuilding of a home after a hurricane. Without a roof covering, exposed homes will continue to deteriorate, pushing repair costs quickly beyond what many can afford. If costs of restoration exceed the value of the home, it may not be salvageable at all.

Lesson One: Safety

Tarping a roof is a repair project to be completed only when a professional contractor is not available and the situation requires swift action. If you can wait to have the project completed later, do so. If foul weather is on the way and tarping is needed to prevent further damage, consider doing the project with some assistance.

Be sure to heed the following safety precautions:

- Don't attempt to stand on a roof that is steeply pitched.
- Don't attempt to stand on a tarp—especially if it is wet.
- Never attempt to go onto a roof during a storm.

Lesson Two: Why Tarping is Needed

In your storm preparation, you boarded up windows and doors. Your roof didn't have that option. The havoc of a hurricane can severely damage your roof, one of the most exposed parts of your home and also one of the most expensive.

An emergency roof covering like a tarp has a temporary lifetime of about 90 days but it can provide a quickly needed solution to:

- Reducing repair & restoration costs after insurance appraisal.
- Giving you time to decide on repair options.
- Providing a stable, dry environment for airing out the interior of the home.
- Stabilizing the interior so you and your family can remove debris and collect undamaged belongings.

It may not be an option you prefer, but post hurricane it may be your only temporary option until a professional contractor can repair your roof properly.

How do you know if you have suffered roof damage after a storm has passed? Pinpointing the exact location can be difficult if an obvious deformity is not identifiable. Storm damage can range from large, highly visible dents and tears to almost undetectable indentations. Even small amounts of damage can harm the surface of your roof and lead to deterioration over time. Leaks can appear to start in one area, but water often moves in paths that are not expected. Before you decide to tarp a roof, first try to identify the roof leak's origination. Start by checking the underside of the roof sheathing for water stains. Survey the roof with binoculars. Use a ladder if necessary. Do not climb onto the roof surface as it may be unstable.

There are several ways to detect and evaluate the condition of a roof after a severe storm. Look for:

- Torn or missing shingles - result from high winds or hail impact
- Dented metal roof vents - caused by hail impact
- Missing metal roof panels - blown off from excessive wind gusts
- Broken or out of place tiles - result from wind, rain or hail impact
- Roof indentations - looks warped or dented, sometimes exposing the fiberglass in asphalt shingles
- Water spots and signs of water - caused by water leaking underneath the roof deck into the attic
- Other home damage - damaged by wind, hail or projectiles, including damage such as broken skylights and windows, tree or shrub damage or car dents

In the case of a low-pitched roof, you may have no alternative but to remove all the roofing just to track down the problem.

Lesson Three: Tarping a Roof

Basically, what you want to do is cover the damage with a woven plastic tarp that is held in place with 2 x 4 wood strips.

- Partially unroll or unfold enough of the tarp to cover the leaking section of the roof from eaves to peak with an additional 4 feet on each end. Cut to fit this length.
- Wrap one end of the tarp around a 2 x 4 that is 2 feet longer than the width of the tarp. The 2 x 4 should be against the roof so it won't collect water and debris. Staple or nail the 2 x 4 to the tarp.
- Sandwich the tarp and 2 x 4 with a second 2 x 4 and nail those together with 3 1/4 inch nails.
- Place the sandwiched tarp along the eaves line and stretch the rest of the tarp goes over the ridge and down the other side of the roof.
- Roll the opposite end of the tarp around another 2 x 4 and sandwich the tarp with a second 2 x 4 and nail it to the roof sheathing, roll side down.
- Using more 2 x 4's, nail down the tarp's sides. They don't have to be rolled in the tarp. Nail in the wood strips a maximum of 10 inches apart.

Lesson Four: Have the Repair Completed Professionally

This type of emergency repair is only a temporary fix for a roof leak and should only be completed in a safe environment with proper safety equipment. Always be sure to have at least one additional person to assist in the repair. Final repair is best left to someone who has the equipment and skill to do it safely and permanently. Roofs are treacherous, particularly when wet and tarps are slippery even when dry.

Materials/Products:

Recommended Items

Woven Plastic Tarp

2 x 4 Wood Strips

Utility Knife

3 1/4 inch Common Nails

Hammer

Gloves

Ladder

Safety Goggles