

ROOFING GUIDE

Asphalt vs. Metal Roofing: Your Pennsylvania Decision Guide

Make the Right Choice for Your Home's Protection and Value

Roof-Tastic & Beyond Exteriors

2020 Edition

Choosing the Right Roof for Pennsylvania's Unique Climate



Pennsylvania homeowners face a critical decision that will protect their families and investments for decades to come: selecting the right roofing material. Your roof isn't just a covering—it's your home's first line of defense against harsh northeastern winters, humid summers, and everything nature throws your way.

With average temperatures swinging from below freezing to over 90 degrees, plus significant snowfall in many regions, choosing between asphalt shingles and metal roofing requires careful consideration of multiple factors.

The roofing industry has evolved dramatically over the past two decades, and today's materials offer unprecedented durability, efficiency, and aesthetic appeal. Yet, many Pennsylvania homeowners struggle with this decision, often relying on outdated information or misconceptions about modern roofing options.

This comprehensive guide will walk you through everything you need to know about asphalt and metal roofing specifically within Pennsylvania's context. You'll discover how each material performs in our state's variable climate, understand the true lifecycle value of each option, and learn which roofing type aligns best.

By the end of this guide, you'll have the knowledge and confidence to make an informed decision that protects your home, enhances its value, and provides peace of mind for years to come. Whether you're replacing an aging roof or building new construction, understanding these two popular roofing materials.

Understanding Pennsylvania's Roofing Challenges

• PENNSYLVANIA'S CLIMATE EXTREMES

Pennsylvania experiences all four seasons distinctly, with significant temperature variations that stress roofing materials. Winter brings heavy snowfall, particularly in northern and western regions, with some areas receiving over 100 inches annually. The freeze-thaw cycle creates expansion and contraction.

• REGIONAL VARIATIONS ACROSS THE STATE

Eastern Pennsylvania, including Philadelphia and surrounding counties, experiences milder winters but higher humidity. The Pocono Mountains region faces intense winter conditions with substantial snow loads. Central Pennsylvania encounters moderate conditions with significant seasonal variation.

• THE MODERN ROOFING LANDSCAPE

Today's roofing materials have advanced far beyond the options available even a decade ago. Modern asphalt shingles feature improved wind resistance ratings, algae-resistant granules, and enhanced warranties. Metal roofing has evolved with specialized coatings, diverse color options, and profiles.

KEY INSIGHT

Pennsylvania's freeze-thaw cycle is the single most significant stress factor for roofing materials in our state. A roof that performs excellently in consistently cold or warm climates may fail prematurely here if not properly designed for temperature fluctuations.

Asphalt Shingles: Pennsylvania's Traditional Choice

Asphalt shingles remain the most common roofing material across Pennsylvania, covering approximately 80% of residential homes. Their popularity stems from several compelling advantages that align well with homeowner priorities.

● PERFORMANCE IN PENNSYLVANIA CONDITIONS

Today's asphalt shingles typically last 20–30 years in Pennsylvania's climate.

- Quality shingles feature Class A fire ratings and wind resistance up to 130 mph
- Premium products extend toward the higher end of that range
- They perform admirably in our temperature ranges when properly installed
- The freeze-thaw cycle does gradually reduce their lifespan
- Essential for Pennsylvania's occasional severe storms

● ADVANTAGES FOR PENNSYLVANIA HOMEOWNERS

Wide availability of qualified installers throughout the state makes installation convenient.

- Extensive color and style options matching diverse architectural styles
- Familiar to insurance companies and home inspectors
- Repairs can be completed easily by local contractors
- Proven performance history in our regional climate
- Compatibility with virtually any roof pitch or complexity

● AESTHETIC VERSATILITY

Asphalt shingles complement Pennsylvania's architectural heritage beautifully. Whether you own a historic Philadelphia rowhouse, a Lancaster County farmhouse, or a Pittsburgh Victorian, you'll find shingle styles that enhance your home's character. Premium designer shingles can replicate the appearance of natural materials.

KEY INSIGHT

Not all asphalt shingles perform equally in Pennsylvania's climate. Look specifically for products with high algae resistance ratings, impact resistance certification, and warranties that explicitly cover freeze-thaw damage.

Metal Roofing: The Long-Term Investment



● MATERIAL OPTIONS AND CONSTRUCTION

Metal roofing encompasses several distinct materials, each with unique properties. Steel roofing—the most common residential option—features galvanized or galvalume coatings with baked-on paint finishes. Aluminum offers superior corrosion resistance. Modern residential metal roofing comes in diverse profiles.

● EXCEPTIONAL DURABILITY IN PENNSYLVANIA

Metal roofing excels in Pennsylvania's challenging conditions. Quality metal roofs regularly last 40-70 years with minimal maintenance—often outlasting the homes they protect. They handle freeze-thaw cycles effortlessly, as metal expands and contracts uniformly without deterioration.

● ENERGY EFFICIENCY ADVANTAGES

Metal roofing reflects solar radiation rather than absorbing it, significantly reducing cooling demands during Pennsylvania summers. Reflective coatings can reduce roof surface temperatures by 50-60 degrees compared to asphalt, translating to lower attic temperatures and reduced air conditioning usage.

● MODERN RESIDENTIAL APPLICATIONS

Standing seam panels create clean, vertical lines popular in contemporary architecture. Metal shingles and shakes replicate traditional appearances while delivering metal's performance benefits. Stone-coated steel combines metal substrates with granular finishes.

KEY INSIGHT

Metal roofing's higher initial investment pays dividends through its exceptional lifespan. When you factor in that one metal roof may outlast two or even three asphalt installations, the lifecycle value equation shifts dramatically.

Maintenance, Insurance, and Practical Considerations

Understanding the ongoing care requirements and broader implications of your roofing choice helps ensure you select the material that best fits your lifestyle and circumstances.

● MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS

Asphalt shingles require periodic inspection, particularly after severe weather events common in Pennsylvania.

- Annual inspections should check for missing or damaged shingles
- Examine flashing integrity and clear debris from valleys
- Gutters need regular cleaning to prevent water backup
- Algae growth may require periodic treatment or cleaning

● INSURANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Pennsylvania insurance companies increasingly recognize metal roofing's superior performance characteristics. Many insurers offer premium discounts for metal roofs, particularly in areas prone to severe weather, reflecting reduced claim likelihood. Metal's Class A fire rating, impact resistance, and wind performance ratings provide tangible risk reduction.

● ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Metal roofing contains 25-95% recycled content and is 100% recyclable at end-of-life. Asphalt shingles contribute significantly to landfill volume, though recycling programs are expanding. Metal's longevity means fewer replacement cycles and reduced material consumption over time.

KEY INSIGHT

Document everything. Maintain detailed records of installation, warranties, inspections, and any repairs. Pennsylvania's weather can be harsh, and comprehensive documentation proves invaluable when filing insurance claims.

Making Your Decision: Critical Factors to Consider

- **TIME HORIZON AND PLANS**

Your intended length of homeownership significantly impacts the optimal choice. If you plan to remain in your home for decades, metal roofing's longevity provides excellent value. You'll likely never reroof again. For shorter-term ownership (under 15 years), asphalt shingles may make more financial sense, as you won't capture metal's full lifespan value.

- **ARCHITECTURAL COMPATIBILITY**

Consider your home's architectural style and neighborhood character. Historic districts or homes with traditional architecture may benefit from asphalt shingles that complement period-appropriate aesthetics. Contemporary homes often showcase standing seam metal beautifully.

- **BUDGET STRUCTURE**

Evaluate how you prefer to allocate resources. Asphalt shingles require lower initial investment but higher lifecycle expense through replacement cycles. Metal roofing demands greater upfront investment but virtually eliminates replacement costs during your ownership.

KEY INSIGHT

There is no universally "best" roofing material—only the best choice for your specific situation. A thoughtful decision considers your home's characteristics, your financial structure, your ownership timeline, and your priorities.

Your Next Steps Toward a Protected Home

You now possess comprehensive knowledge about Pennsylvania's two most popular roofing materials and how they perform in our state's demanding climate. The choice between asphalt shingles and metal roofing aligns with your priorities.

Both materials offer legitimate advantages for Pennsylvania homeowners. Asphalt shingles provide proven performance, aesthetic versatility, and accessible installation expertise throughout the state. Metal roofing delivers exceptional longevity, superior weather resistance, and potential energy savings that compound over decades.

● TAKING ACTION: YOUR IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

1. Assess your current roof's condition and determine your realistic replacement timeline
2. Clarify your ownership horizon—do you plan to stay 10, 20, or 30+ years?
3. Evaluate your home's architectural style and research which materials complement it best
4. Request detailed proposals from qualified contractors for both asphalt and metal options
5. Review proposals comprehensively, examining pricing, warranty coverage, and details
6. Verify contractor credentials, including licensing, insurance, and PA references

The roof you choose will protect your family, possessions, and investment for decades. This decision deserves careful consideration, professional guidance, and confidence in your choice.

● Ready to explore your roofing options?

Roof-Tastic & Beyond Exteriors brings decades of experience installing both asphalt and metal roofing systems throughout Pennsylvania. We'll provide honest assessment, detailed proposals, and expert installation that ensures your roof performs optimally. **Contact Roof-Tastic & Beyond Exteriors today for your free, no-obligation consultation.**

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