

# INSURANCE | UNDERSTANDING YOUR ROOFING INSURANCE POLICY

May and June are the most popular months for home buying. For new homeowners, this is an exciting time. While there are many things to consider when purchasing a house, one critical element is the roof. A solid, wellmaintained roof protects your home from water damage, mold, and harsh weather (rain, wind, snow, and hail) while also supporting the structure and preventing collapse. A strong roof can also improve energy efficiency. In short, a solid roof is a solid investment.

When it comes to insuring your home, especially your roof, there are two important terms to understand: Replacement Cost Value (RCV) and Actual Cash Value (ACV).

RCV is the cost to repair or replace damaged property with new materials of similar kind and quality. ACV is the replacement cost minus depreciation (age, wear, and tear).

For example, if a 10-year-old roof costs \$10,000 to replace today (RCV) but has 50% depreciation, an ACV policy will provide \$5,000, while an RCV policy will pay the full \$10,000 (minus deductibles). With an ACV plan, you would need to pay the remaining \$5,000 to complete the repair.

Roof schedules are an important part of many homeowners' insurance policies, and it's important to read your policy and talk with your agent to understand how your roof is covered. Some insurers reduce roof coverage as the roof ages, moving from full replacement cost to actual cash value after a certain number of years. Because the average roof replacement runs around \$12,000, depending on size and materials, even a small reduction in coverage can leave homeowners responsible for significant out-of-pocket costs. Understanding these provisions ahead of time helps ensure you are fully aware of your financial exposure if damage occurs.

#### Things to consider:

- Consider upgrading your roof to make it more resilient. The Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety's Fortified roof standards are a useful guide.
- In Wyoming, adding windresistant features—such as windresistant hurricane clips—is often a smart choice.
- Review your homeowner's policy to confirm coverage for windstorms and hail. Some policies include special deductibles for certain parts of the home, including the roof. Your in-



insurance agent can clarify these details. Roofing materials to consider:

- Metal roofing is highly resistant to wind, snow, and fire and lasts many years. Slate is the longestlasting option, with a life expectancy of more than 150 years, followed by clay and concrete tile. However, these materials can be expensive and heavy, often requiring additional structural support.
- Asphalt shingles are the most common roofing material for U.S. homes. Traditional asphalt shingles typically last 10–20 years, while newer, higher-quality options may last 30 years or more and come with warranties of up to 50 years. These shingles include multiple layers of materials for enhanced wind resistance and fire resistance and are generally more affordable than wood or slate.
- Other options include tile, copper, zinc, and aluminum. Each has advantages and challenges, so consulting a local roofing professional can help you determine what works best for your home.

Factors affecting your roof's lifespan:

- Climate: Wyoming's hot summers, cold winters, heavy rain, and strong winds can accelerate wear and tear.
  - Proper installation and maintenance: A wellinstalled roof provides a stronger foundation. Regular maintenance—such as cleaning gutters, repairing leaks, inspecting flashing around chimneys and vents, and trimming overhanging branches—can extend your roof's life.
  - Age: Even with proper care, every roof will eventually require repair or replacement. Know the materials used and their typical lifespan.
- Assignment of benefits (AOB) or assignment of rights in roofing claims occurs when a homeowner signs over their insurance claim rights to a roofing contractor. This allows the contractor to work directly with the insurance company, submit documentation, and receive payment without the homeowner being involved in every step. While this can seem convenient, especially for homeowners who feel overwhelmed by claim paperwork, it also transfers significant control to the contractor.

In some cases, contractors may inflate costs, pursue unnecessary repairs, or engage in aggressive legal action against the insurer, all under the homeowner's assigned rights. These disputes can slow down claim resolution or even leave the homeowner caught in the middle if the insurer denies payment. Additionally, poorly drafted assignments can limit the homeowner's ability to challenge workmanship issues or negotiate billing.

Buying a home is a major milestone, and understanding your roof's condition and insurance coverage can help protect that investment for years to come.

By choosing durable materials, staying informed about your insurance policy, and maintaining your roof regularly, you can reduce risk, avoid costly surprises, and ensure your home remains safe and secure through Wyoming's challenging weather.

If you have questions or are unsure where to start, a trusted roofing professional or insurance agent can guide you through the best options for your situation.

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