

Metal roofing: worth the extra cost?

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Drive around in just about any neighborhood in America and you're pretty much guaranteed to see asphalt shingle roofs on nearly all of them. Asphalt shingles dominate the roofing industry. They account for 90% of residential roofs. Asphalt shingles are very easy to install and are inexpensive making them the most affordable roofing option. In a higher end neighborhood you may see some tile, some cedar shakes, and maybe some slate roofs. One roofing material that is only just now growing in popularity is metal. There are many advantages to metal roofing; they are superior to asphalt roofs in every way. Thanks to advances in roofing material manufacturing, metal can now be used to create roofs that mimic the look of other materials and they can come in virtually any color. But the one factor that is keeping metal roofing from becoming as popular as asphalt shingles is the high cost. Depending on the quality, a metal roof can cost 2-3 times as much as an asphalt shingle roof. If you're in the market for a new roof, here are some things to keep in mind about metal roofing to help you weigh the pros and cons.

Types of metal roofing

The first thing to keep in mind is that there is more than one type of metal roof. When most people imagine a metal roof, they imagine the kind of roof you might see on the local McDonalds. This is called a standing seam roof. This type of metal roof is made of larger sheets. This type of roofing is used on everything from commercial businesses to chicken coops and even some residences. Residential standing seam roofs typically have a thicker gauge and are more durable.

Because standing seam roofs have a more commercial look, a more popular option for residences is the metal shake roof. The metal is cut into smaller pieces like cedar shake roofs. This is more expensive but it allows for more stylistic options.

Finally, stone-coated metal roofs are made to look like asphalt shingles. They have all of the advantages of a metal roof but they still have the granule texture of an asphalt shingle roof. These are especially popular in colder climates that get a lot of snow. Whereas snow can avalanche off of a standing seam or metal shake roof, stone coated metal roofs melt snow more like asphalt shingle roofs do.

Pros and cons

Metal roofing has a lot more pros than cons. First, their lifespan is much longer than asphalt shingles. A standard asphalt shingle roof will last about 20 years if you're lucky and take great care of it. A metal roof can last 50 years and usually comes with a lifetime warranty. This isn't always a deciding factor however, as the average homeowner only spends 13 years in a home. Homeowners who don't plan to stay in their home a long time might not want to pay 2-3 times as much for a metal roof when an asphalt shingle roof will easily last for the duration of time they'll be staying there.

Metal roofing is also a lot more durable than asphalt shingles. It holds up better in nasty weather and requires a lot less maintenance. They are more energy efficient and cut energy costs in the summer and the winter.

The only real con to metal roofing is the higher cost. Homeowners who plan to stay a long time in the home could really benefit from metal roofing in the long run because of the minimal maintenance, the energy savings, and the longevity of the roof. If you can afford the higher up front cost, it may be a wise investment.

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Source: startribune. com/home-inspector-is-metal-roofing-worth-the-extra-cost/318755691/



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