

# ROOFING MATERIALS

## RECOGNIZING ROOFING MATERIALS

Before you can make even a minor roof repair, and certainly before you consider reroofing, you must be able to recognize the type of roofing material on your home. As mentioned previously, the type of roof you have, or will have, depends very much on where you live. The majority of homes in temperate climates will have asphalt shingles, which are easy enough to recognize. To test the shingle, go up a ladder to the roof or reach out a window and lift a shingle. If it bends, it is asphalt.

Wood shingles or shakes are impossible to disguise. A detailed description is given later in this chapter, but even if you do not know at this point whether they are shingles or shakes, you can tell whether they are wood.

Other possibilities for those in temperate zones are cement asbestos, slate and—more rarely—roll roofing or clay tile. Most are easy to identify. You could be fooled, however, by cement asbestos. These may look like asphalt or slate from afar. But if you try to bend one you will find that it is stiff, not flexible. Also, asbestos tiles are usually pale reddish-brown in color, and are much thinner than slate or clay tile.

Although flat clay tiles exist, by far the most common form is the semi-rounded type universally associated with Mediterranean or Spanish-style homes. Don't assume it's clay until you take a closer look, since many companies now make metal tiles that resemble clay tiles. These are quite popular because of their lower price. Metal "clay" tiles are thinner. To test, touch one.

If your roof is flat or very low in pitch, your roof probably is of built-up or roll

roofing. It is common practice in the Southwest to cover the asphalt roofing with a layer of stone or gravel. The stone merely acts as a shield against the hot rays of the sun, much as the mineral granules in shingles do. Underneath it all are built-up layers of roofing felt. Roll roofing is uncommon in residential use, but is easily recognizable by the long flat sheets, its regular joints and untextured surface.

## ESTIMATING ROOFING NEEDS

If you have determined that all or a substantial portion of your roof needs replacement, your next steps are deciding what type and how many roofing materials you must buy.

### Direct Measurement

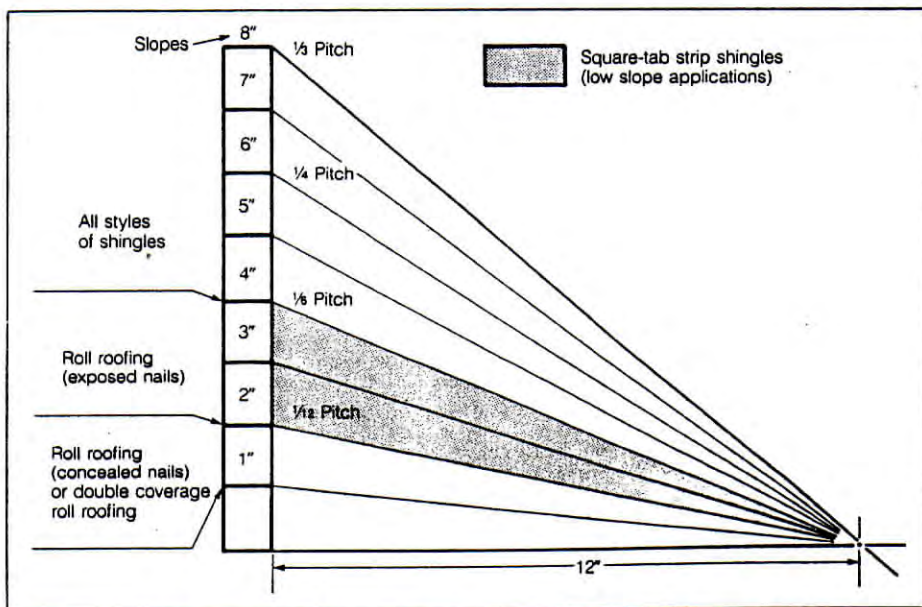
The simplest and most effective method of estimating roofing needs is to physical-

ly measure the area to be covered. If access is not too difficult, a folding or pull-out rule can accurately determine the dimensions of each of the roof planes. A long pull-out rule is best because you can hook it over the edge and stretch it out to its maximum length.

With multiple planes, it is best to make some rough drawings of each plane, and mark the measurements as you go along. Multiply the length and width of each plane and add them.

**Figuring the "squares" needed.** Once you have the square footage of the entire roofing area, divide by 100 to find out how many "squares" you need. Roofing is sold that way, by squares, with each square covering 100 square feet.

**Final quantities.** If you want to be precise, subtract gaps in the roofing for chimneys, skylights, or whatever. But, unless these gaps are large, it won't



The type of shingle or roofing that is suitable will depend partially upon the pitch of the roof. Special procedures are required for low slope and steep roofs.