

**THE  
RESENE  
EASY  
DECORATING  
GUIDE**

# RAISING THE ROOF

'A roof over your head' is more than just an expression - every rental property needs a well-maintained, watertight roof, writes **Sharon Newey**



**RENOVATION:** ROOFING

**PUTTING A LID** on a house, and keeping it weathertight is a key structural element to any building. If you have a good roof, chances are you have a sound home.

And when something goes wrong, like a leak, it can be one of the most frustrating problems to fix. Water travels so sneakily - along roof trusses, rafters and into insulation - that often the leak in the roof isn't aligned with the leak in the ceiling. Water can also sit in your roof cavity, soaking into insulation, for a long time before there is any visual evidence of a problem in the room below. Then whole sections of the ceiling can collapse and land you with a major repair bill, and not just a small hole to fix.

If your tenants report mouldy or damp patches in the ceiling, check it out right away. It may be a leak in disguise.

Having a professional check it out is the best way to detect exactly where the source of a leak is, and how to fix it.

## **AVOIDING THE BIG BILLS**

Hopefully with a good maintenance regime you can avoid having to find and fix a leak at all.

Not only is it frustrating but replacing or patching a roof is expensive and tricky (and your tenants may have to move out, resulting in a loss of income) so keeping the roof well maintained in the first place is wise. An annual check of the roof will tell you if it needs attention.

Keeping the roof clean and free of lichen and moss is one of the best preventatives.



Moss will trap moisture, letting it sit on the surface of your roof, slowly but surely doing its damage. It's tempting to assume that in a fairly rainy country such as New Zealand, the roof will be regularly and naturally washed but there are always areas that get less rain-wash or need to be freed of dirt build-up. Use a specialised product like Resene Roof Wash and Paint Cleaner.

Trim any trees that overhang the roof. Not only will they continually drop leaf litter and block your gutters but will also shade the roof, encouraging moss growth. Branches can also scratch or damage the roof.

Double-check any more complicated

areas, such as where different gullies or ridges join, as well as any place where something penetrates the roof such as flues, chimneys or vent pipes.

Also double-check flashings as these may fail before the rest of the roof and are a key element in your roofing system.

If the rental property is near the sea, industrial areas or busy arterial traffic routes, you will need to check the roof more regularly as salt-laden air and a gritty more polluted environment will speed up deterioration of your roof.

If the property has a flat roof, check for ponding and damage to the roofing membrane.



**DOUBLE-CHECK  
FLASHINGS AS THESE  
MAY FAIL BEFORE THE  
REST OF THE ROOF**

### **GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES**

Make sure the gutters are kept clear so that water can run away to where it's supposed to. If guttering is buckled or the brackets are loose, it may also affect run-off by allowing water to pond. Guttering may need straightening or that section replaced. Consider a gutter-guard system for places where you can't avoid leaf litter.

Guttering can fail at the joins so check these. And check guttering set into the valleys of a roof where, if debris collects, rain water backs up and finds its way through the roof rather than down it.

### **TYPES OF ROOFING**

Long-run corrugated iron is a Kiwi classic and found on many of our houses. It's one of the easier roofs to maintain and fix. As long as you keep it well-painted with a product like Resene Summit Roof paint and clean it regularly, it will last for years. If you chose a dark colour, consider using Resene CoolColour paint which reflects some of the sun's heat so lessens the heat build-up and stress on the roof.

Long run can also be patched, treated for rust and if it's an older roof, you can retrofit modern roofing screws to keep it more weather-tight. Long-run comes in many different profiles, not just the classic corrugated style.

Colour steel or pre-painted long-run is a popular choice if you are completely reroofing. It comes ready painted so is easier and quicker to get up and won't need repainting.

Concrete tiles are found on many 1940s to 1960s homes, especially the ex-state homes which are such popular rental properties. Tiles from that era will have aged and begun to absorb moisture. These can be resealed and painted by specialist companies, and broken tiles replaced.

Stone chip surfaced steel tiles. The stone chip surface can become loose and chips can collect in your gutters. These types of roofs can also be restored and rechipped.

Shingles in their many forms – there are natural materials such as clay, slate and timber but many made to look like them. There are eco versions and those made of asphalt. These can be replaced individually as long as you have access to the same product as originally installed so that the roof doesn't end up looking patchy.

### **SAFETY FIRST**

If you are doing repairs, painting or trimming trees yourself, make sure you're safe. Use good ladder safety (and put a block of timber into the gutter so you don't damage it with the ladder), make sure the roof is dry, walk along the nail lines so you don't damage the roof and if the roof is steep, use a second ladder secured on to the roof, safety ropes and a harness.

If there are nearby power lines, have the power disconnected before you begin work.

Considering all of that fuss, it may be best to use a professional who is already geared up for the job. ■