

Asphalt Composition Shingles

Cover your roof with asphalt shingles and you won't be alone. Eighty percent of the homes in the United States have this type of roofing. A visit to any neighborhood reveals the huge range of shingle colors and types.

Also known as composition or 3-tab shingles, asphalt shingles are your least expensive roofing option. They must be used on sloped, not flat, roofs so that the water runs off them properly. The minimum slope is 3 in 12, which means a vertical rise of 3 inches for every 12 horizontal inches.

Asphalt shingles last anywhere from 15 to 35 years. "Inorganic" shingles, with a fiberglass mat base, last longer than the traditional felt-base shingles. Increasingly, the pricier asphalt shingles are designed to imitate more expensive slate, wood or clay roofs.