

Timing Is Critical to Reroofing Success

by Jim Koontz

It is not uncommon for a substantial percentage of a university's building maintenance budget to include the cost of periodically reroofing buildings. Efficient management of these funds can be accomplished by timely planning. Here's a timeline for planning reroofing projects that practically guarantees success.

Fall: Set Your Priorities

The best time to prepare reroof plans and specifications is during the fall. Begin by creating a priority list of buildings scheduled for reroofing or maintenance. This list should be kept on file and updated as problems arise and are resolved.

Winter: Construction Documents

The very nature of the roofing industry is that contractors are slow during the winter months as inclement weather — in all geographical locations — slows down the whole roofing industry. This is the best time to prepare construction documents.

A construction document is the reroofing design. It includes physical drawings and written specifications encompassing roof plans and all major flashing details. Drawings should also reflect the height of the buildings, points of access for the roofer and be sufficiently detailed that the roofer can prepare an accurate cost estimate for his bid proposal.

Selection of proper roofing materials is always critical. It's important to select a roofing system with a demonstrated history of long-term performance. A roofing manufacturer should be able to provide verifiable documentation that its system has performed well for at least 10 years.

The design should comply with all local building codes and should take into consideration any additional structural loads added to the building. If there is any question concerning the existing structure or the adding of

weight to the roof deck, a structural engineer should be consulted. Other design points should include wind, earthquake and snow loading, drainage and any unique geographical factors. Construction documents should be specific and should note who's responsible for removal and disposal of debris. The designer should verify the type of deck and the systems in place. Insulation and membrane specifications should be specific as to types, thickness and means of attachment. Physical performance attributes of insulation, membrane and roof covering components should be specified and can include compliance with national standards and local codes.

Spring: Bids

The best time to take bids from a pricing standpoint is in March and April. Delaying the receipt of bids until later in the spring and summer months can result in substantial increases in reroofing costs.

Bidding reroofing projects in early spring ensures adequate time to receive and review bids; prepare and execute contract documents; and review material submittals, insurance certificates and performance bonds. Contract documents should include a construction schedule with a start and completion date.

It is important to hold a pre-bid conference, requiring all prospective bidders to attend. Representatives of the college, material manufacturers and the design professional should attend this meeting. Questions such as access, timing and clarifications of construction documents can be addressed at this meeting.

Summer: Construction

The reroofing goal is to complete all projects before fall, as materials for many roofing systems are weather sensitive.

A preconstruction conference, followed by inspections during construction by

the design professional, is critical to ensuring quality control during the project. Representatives of the material manufacturers should also provide independent inspection and verification that their products are being installed in a manner consistent with the manufacturer's minimum quality control requirements. Roofing manufacturers should guarantee, as part of the submittal process through roofer verification, that the products shipped to the project site comply with the minimum standard of the contract documents. Some laboratory testing of the as-delivered products and completed roofing may be advisable to ensure that the products, as delivered and installed, comply with the terms of the contract and manufacturer's marketing literature. Final inspections should document any items of correction required to finish the project. Upon completion, the contractor should provide release of liens, guarantees, as-built drawings and final pay requests.

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Reroofing Tips

- Be proactive rather than reactive in your roofing projects: Develop a priority list of buildings scheduled for reroofing or maintenance.
- The design of a reroofing project should be performed by a licensed professional architect or engineer with roofing expertise.
- Be wary of new roofing products, which may have disastrous performance results. Also be wary of long-term guarantees.
- A roofer should not remove any more roofing than can be completed on a day-to-day basis.