

# Installing Synthetic Underlayment

## Overview

Synthetic roof underlayment is a protective layer installed between the roof deck and the roofing material. Its purpose is to provide a secondary barrier against water intrusion and protect the roof deck if shingles or tiles are damaged during storms. In Florida's heavy rain and wind conditions, properly installed underlayment is critical for preventing leaks and extending the life of the roofing system. At Trust Roofing, our crews follow a consistent installation process to ensure underlayment is installed flat, sealed properly, and secured to withstand the conditions common in Tampa Bay.

## Our Field Standards

Synthetic underlayment is used when a durable, water-resistant barrier is required beneath roofing materials.

Our crews typically install synthetic underlayment:

- As a cost-effective alternative to full peel-and-stick systems beneath shingles
- When an existing peel-and-stick layer is already installed and a secondary underlayment layer is required
- When preparing the roof deck for final roofing materials

Proper installation helps ensure the roof system remains watertight and structurally sound before shingles, metal panels, or tile are installed.

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Roofing work involves working at height and requires proper safety equipment and training. The information in this course is intended for educational purposes. Homeowners should consult a licensed roofing professional before attempting roof repairs or modifications.

## Our Process

### Roof Deck Preparation

Before underlayment is installed, our crews prepare the roof deck to ensure the surface is safe and structurally sound.

This includes:

- Cleaning the roof deck and removing debris
- Replacing any damaged or rotted wood
- Removing old nails, staples, or sharp materials
- Reinforcing decking if necessary
- Ensuring plywood clips and decking seams are flat
- A clean, solid roof deck is essential before installing any protective layers.

### Valley Protection

Roof valleys are one of the most vulnerable areas for water intrusion.

Our crews install peel-and-stick membrane or valley metal in all valleys before laying synthetic underlayment. Florida building codes require valley protection to prevent water penetration where two roof planes meet.

During installation we ensure:

- The material lays flat with no wrinkles
- Full adhesion or proper fastening is achieved
- Valleys are completely sealed before proceeding

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### Underlayment Installation

Synthetic underlayment is installed beginning at the bottom edge of the roof and working upward toward the ridge.

During installation our crews ensure:

- The material overlaps properly between rows
- Edges extend slightly past the eaves and rakes
- Underlayment lies flat without wrinkles or bubbles
- Existing peel-and-stick layers are smooth before covering

When installing over existing materials, our crews may inspect the attic to confirm the underlying roof deck is still structurally sound.

### Layering Requirements

Depending on the roof system, one or two layers of synthetic underlayment may be installed.

- If deck seam tape is **not used**, two layers may be installed to provide additional protection.
- If seam tape is used, a **single layer** may be acceptable depending on the manufacturer specifications.

Our crews always follow the roofing manufacturer's guidelines for the specific materials being installed.

### Fastening the Underlayment

Proper fastening ensures the underlayment remains secure during installation and prevents wind damage before final roofing materials are installed.

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Our crews use **plastic cap nails** and follow spacing standards:

- Approximately **6 inches apart along edges**
- Approximately **12 inches apart in the center of each row**

Local building codes and manufacturer instructions may require different spacing depending on the product used.

### Penetrations and Transitions

Areas around roof penetrations require additional attention.

Our crews carefully cut the underlayment around:

- Plumbing vents
- Skylights
- Exhaust vents
- Wall transitions

The material is fitted tightly around these penetrations and extended behind flashing when possible to help direct water away from vulnerable areas.

## Quality Standards

Before installing the final roofing materials, our crews perform several checks to ensure the underlayment system is installed correctly.

This includes verifying:

- The surface is flat with no wrinkles or tears
- Valley protection is installed properly

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- Edges extend correctly at eaves and rakes
- Fasteners are spaced correctly
- Penetrations are sealed and protected

These checks help ensure the roofing system performs properly once shingles, tile, or metal roofing are installed.

## Roofing Terms

### Roof Underlayment

A protective layer installed between the roof deck and the roofing material that provides secondary water protection.

### Valley

The area where two roof slopes meet, which channels water off the roof.

### Roof Deck

The structural surface of the roof where roofing materials are installed.

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