

Make Short Work of a Leaky Roof

A leaky roof usually starts off as a small problem, but it can quickly escalate if left unchecked. Water flows downward to the lowest level possible. Moisture on a roof follows the same path, travelling to a low spot on a ceiling, pooling, spreading and eventually leaking through the drywall or other ceiling material.

In some cases, moisture may merely stain a ceiling. In other cases, moisture will cause paint to bubble and eventually burst. A leak may also break through in one or more spots and cause drips or pooling on the floor.



When a leak is spotted, it's important to repair it as soon as possible. A leak caused by a pipe should be traced to its source and stopped. A leak in a roof should be traced and fixed. If conditions don't allow for immediate repair, the leak should be tarped or isolated with waterproof material to keep out additional moisture and avoid further

damage. In addition to damage to the roof and rooms below, dampness and leaks allowed to remain over time will promote the growth of mold and mildew. Both are considered unhealthy pollutants to indoor air.

Water saturation harms a ceiling by damaging material. Wallboard disintegrates; wood can swell, warp, and rot; electrical parts can short out, malfunction, and cause fires or shock. The resultant dampness promotes the growth of moisture-related mold, mildew, and fungus that leads to dry rot.

To promote natural and controlled drying from a leak, wet insulation should be removed and disposed of properly. After being wet, most insulation is ineffective, but it will continue to hold moisture for a long time and will create high moisture conditions which will damage metal, masonry, and wood.



Inspect the ceiling carefully. Wet plaster and sheetrock are heavy, and bulging ceilings can hold trapped water. Any stored water can be collected in buckets by poking holes at the edge of the bulging ceiling to release the water.

Once the leak has been stopped and the ceiling is dry, the damaged portion of the ceiling needs to be removed. Drywall repair kits that aid in the ceiling repair are sold in hardware stores. In essence, a frame will be inserted into the hole in the ceiling, and drywall compound will be smoothed over the frame. When dry, the compound can be sanded and smoothed, and then repainted to match the rest of the ceiling.