



A Complete Guide to Commercial Roofing Systems

How to Choose, Manage, and
Maintain the Right Roof for
Your Property

**National Coverage.
Local Service.
Trusted Results.™**

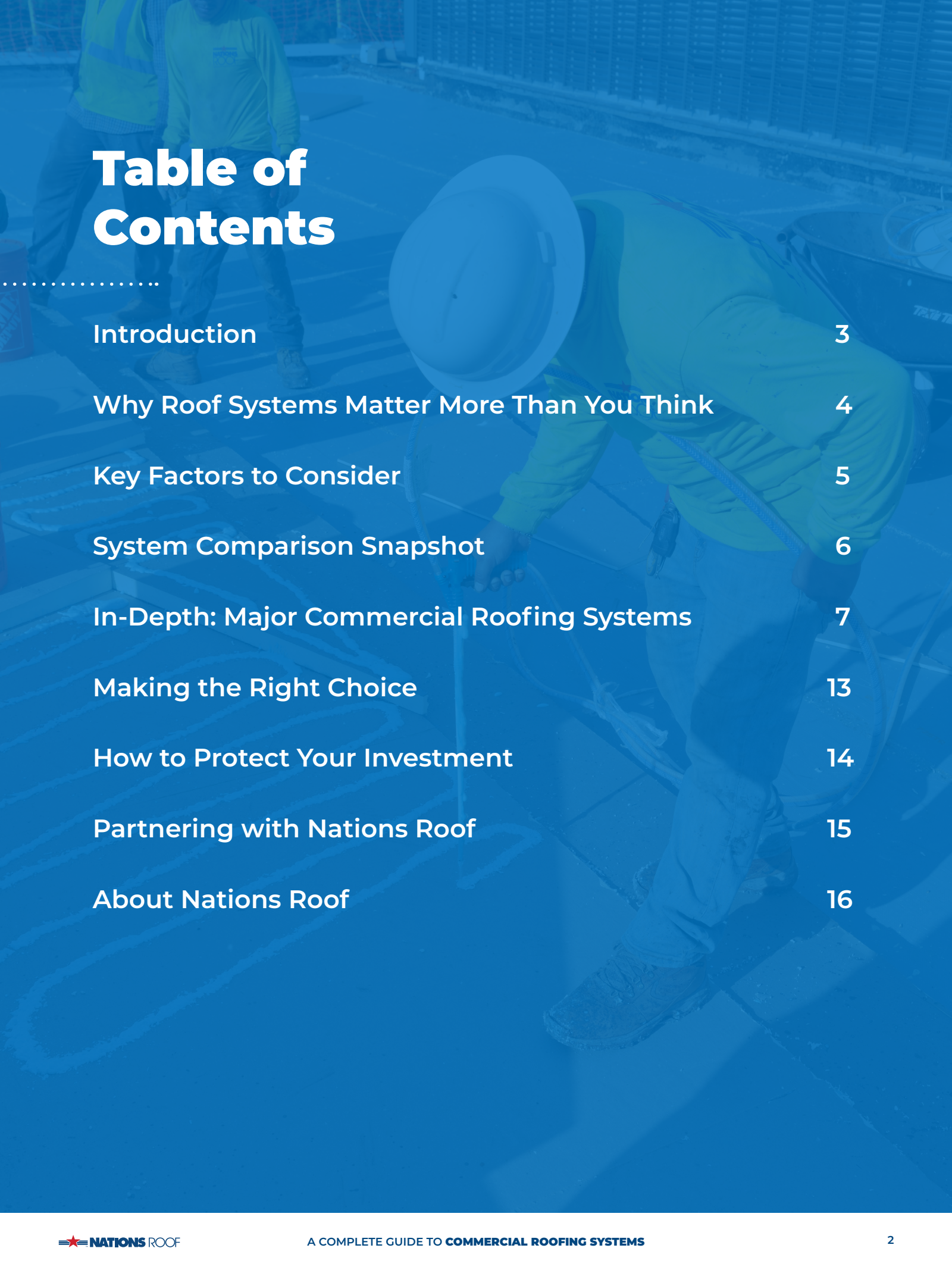


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Introduction

Your commercial roof isn't just a structure; it's a critical asset. It protects your building, tenants, inventory, and operations. Choosing the wrong roof system can lead to:

- Shorter lifespan
- Voided warranties
- Energy inefficiencies
- Unexpected maintenance and costs

This guide walks you through the most common types of commercial roof systems, how to choose the right one, and how to protect your investment — whether you manage one location or a national portfolio.



Why Roof Systems Matter More Than You Think



REAL-WORLD SAVINGS

Many building owners and facility managers inherit their roof systems — but too few understand how much they actually impact the bottom line.

Your commercial roof affects:

- Energy performance
- Insurance risk
- Occupant comfort
- Disruption during repairs
- Maintenance and replacement costs

When Nestlé needed to recover a 1.1 million SF distribution facility roof, Nations Roof helped them reuse existing insulation — **saving over \$1.3 million in materials and disposal costs.**



Key Factors to Consider

BUILDING STRUCTURE

- Slope, deck type, and load-bearing limits
- HVAC or solar equipment on roof
- Insurance requirements (e.g., FM Global, UL, or corporate risk standards)

CLIMATE & WEATHER

- UV intensity, snow load, ponding, storm risk, and wind load

FOOT TRAFFIC

- Rooftop access for maintenance, solar, or tenants?
- Reinforced surfaces may be required

BUDGET & LIFECYCLE COST

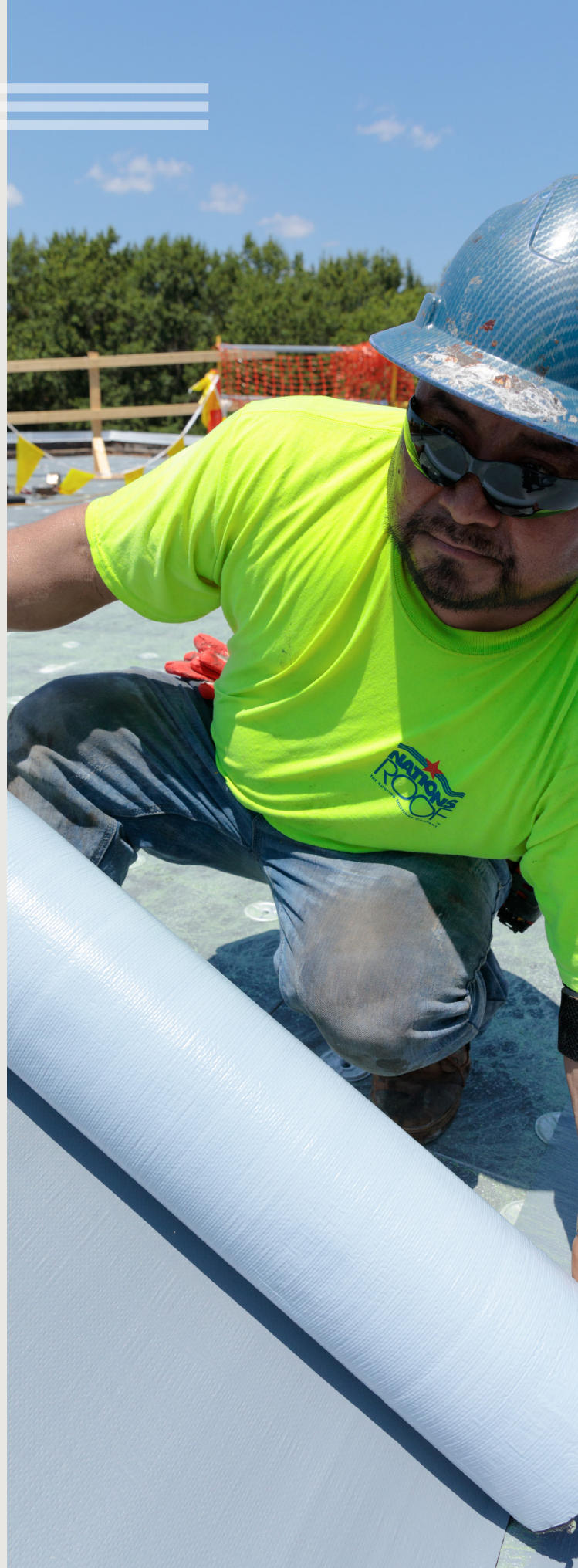
- Upfront install vs. long-term maintenance
- Energy savings and utility rebates

WARRANTY & COMPLIANCE

- Manufacturer specs must be followed
- Wrong installs may void coverage

SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

- Reflectivity and R-values
- Recyclability or LEED point contribution



Standard System Snapshot Comparison

SYSTEM	BEST FOR	COST	LIFESPAN	ENERGY PERF.	INSTALL DISRUPTION	MAINTENANCE	FOOT TRAFFIC	WARRANTY
TPO	Energy savings, warm climates	\$\$	15-30 Yrs	High	Minimal	Low	Moderate	✓
EPDM	Cold, open climates spans	\$\$	20-30 Yrs	Low	Minimal	Low	Low	✓
PVC	Chemical resistance, restaurants	\$\$\$	20-30 Yrs	High	Minimal	Moderate	Low	✓
Modified Bitumen	High traffic, flexibility	\$\$	15-25 Yrs	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	✓
BUR	Long-term durability	\$\$\$	20-30 Yrs	Low	Extended	Moderate	Low	✓
Metal	Visible roofs, longevity focus	\$\$\$\$	30-50+ Yrs	Moderate	Extended	Low	Moderate	✓
Coatings	Aging warehouses, light-industrial, retail, or office	\$-\$	5-15 Yrs	High	Minimal	Low	Low	✓



Want a more detailed version of this chart?

Download the full [Commercial Roofing System Comparison Guide](#) to see how each option stacks up on disruption, warranty compatibility, energy performance, and more.

In-Depth: Major Commercial Roofing Systems

TPO (THERMOPLASTIC POLYOLEFIN)

A single-ply roofing membrane known for reflectivity and fast installation.

- Heat-welded seams for watertight performance
- Highly reflective — reduces cooling costs
- Available in standard colors (white, gray, tan) as well as specialty colors
- Recyclable and UV-resistant



Best for:

Energy Savings in hot climates



\$\$



15-30 YRS



✓✓✓



Fast Install
Time



Low
Maintenance

EPDM (ETHYLENE PROPYLENE DIENE MONOMER)

A flexible synthetic rubber roof system with a long lifespan.

- Resistant to UV, weather, chemicals, & grease
- Ideal for cold climates or large roof spans
- Low installation cost
- Comes in black, white, or gray (top-coated)



Best for:

Budget-focused projects in variable climates



\$\$



20-30 YRS



✓



Fast Install
Time



Low
Maintenance

In-Depth: Major Commercial Roofing Systems

PVC (POLYVINYL CHLORIDE)

A durable, fire-resistant membrane with strong chemical performance.

- Excellent resistance to grease and chemicals
- Hot-air welded seams = watertight barrier
- Can mimic standing seam metal visually
- Recyclable and weldable
- Available in standard colors (white, gray, tan) as well as specialty colors



Best for:

Facilities requiring chemical resistance and long-term durability, including restaurants, labs, retail, commercial, and industrial properties.



\$\$\$



20-30 YRS



Fast Install
Time



Moderate
Maintenance

MODIFIED BITUMEN

A multi-layer membrane made from asphalt and polymers.

- Extremely durable and flexible
- Ideal for rooftops with foot traffic
- Applied using cold adhesive, torch, or hot asphalt
- Strong resistance to wind, fire, and hail



Best for:

High-traffic commercial rooftops



\$\$



15-25 YRS



Moderate
Install Time



Moderate
Maintenance

In-Depth: Major Commercial Roofing Systems

BUILT-UP ROOFING (BUR)

A time-tested system with multiple layers of bitumen and ply sheets.

- Superior waterproofing and redundancy
- Heavy-duty protection against extreme weather
- Gravel-surfaced for durability
- Slower, more labor-intensive install



Best for:

Facilities needing long-term protection



\$\$\$



20-30 YRS



Slow Install
Time



Moderate
Maintenance

METAL ROOFING SYSTEMS

Long-lasting, aesthetically appealing roofing panels or standing seam options.

- High durability and weather resistance
- Excellent drainage and thermal performance
- Can be installed on low or steep slopes
- Supports solar panels or snow guards



Best for:

Long-term ROI and visible rooftops



\$\$\$\$



30-50+ YRS



✓✓



Slow Install
Time



Low
Maintenance

In-Depth: Major Commercial Roofing Systems

ROOF COATING SYSTEMS

A liquid-applied protective layer that extends roof life and improves performance.

- Cost-effective alternative to replacement
- Minimizes disruption during install
- Available in reflective or waterproof options (acrylic/silicone)
- May qualify for energy rebates



Best for:

Extending life of aging flat or metal roofs



\$-\$



5-15 YRS



✓✓✓



Fast Install Time



Low Maintenance

LIQUID-APPLIED MEMBRANES

Low-odor options available; can minimize disruptions in occupied buildings.

- Reaches tight spaces and penetrations
- Low-odor options available; can minimize disruptions in occupied buildings
- Excellent for re-roofing occupied buildings
- Flexible and UV-stable



Best for:

Sensitive buildings requiring odor-free, low-disruption solutions



\$



10-30 YRS



✓✓



Medium Install Time



Low Maintenance

In-Depth: Major Commercial Roofing Systems

GREEN ROOF SYSTEMS

Vegetative roofs that combine sustainability with function.

- Provides insulation and storm water management
- Creates rooftop amenities and biodiversity
- Requires specialized design and load capacity
- May qualify for tax incentives



Best for:

Eco-conscious campuses, mixed-use, or LEED projects



\$\$\$\$



20-40 YRS



✓✓✓



Slow Install
Time



High
Maintenance

PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) SOLAR SYSTEMS

Solar-ready roofing systems that generate energy from sunlight.

- Reduces utility costs over time
- Often paired with TPO, PVC, or metal systems
- Requires waterproof integration planning
- Potentially eligible for tax incentives and grants



Best for:

Long-term cost savings in high-sun regions



\$\$\$\$



25-30 YRS



✓✓✓



Medium
Install Time



Low
Maintenance

In-Depth: Major Commercial Roofing Systems

STEEP SLOPE ROOFS

Common on design-driven commercial buildings like hotels and universities.

- Includes shingles, slate, tile, metal panels
- Aesthetic appeal with drainage benefits
- Material selection depends on pitch and location
- Requires experienced steep-slope crews



Best for:

Buildings with visible pitched roofs



Varies



20-50 YRS



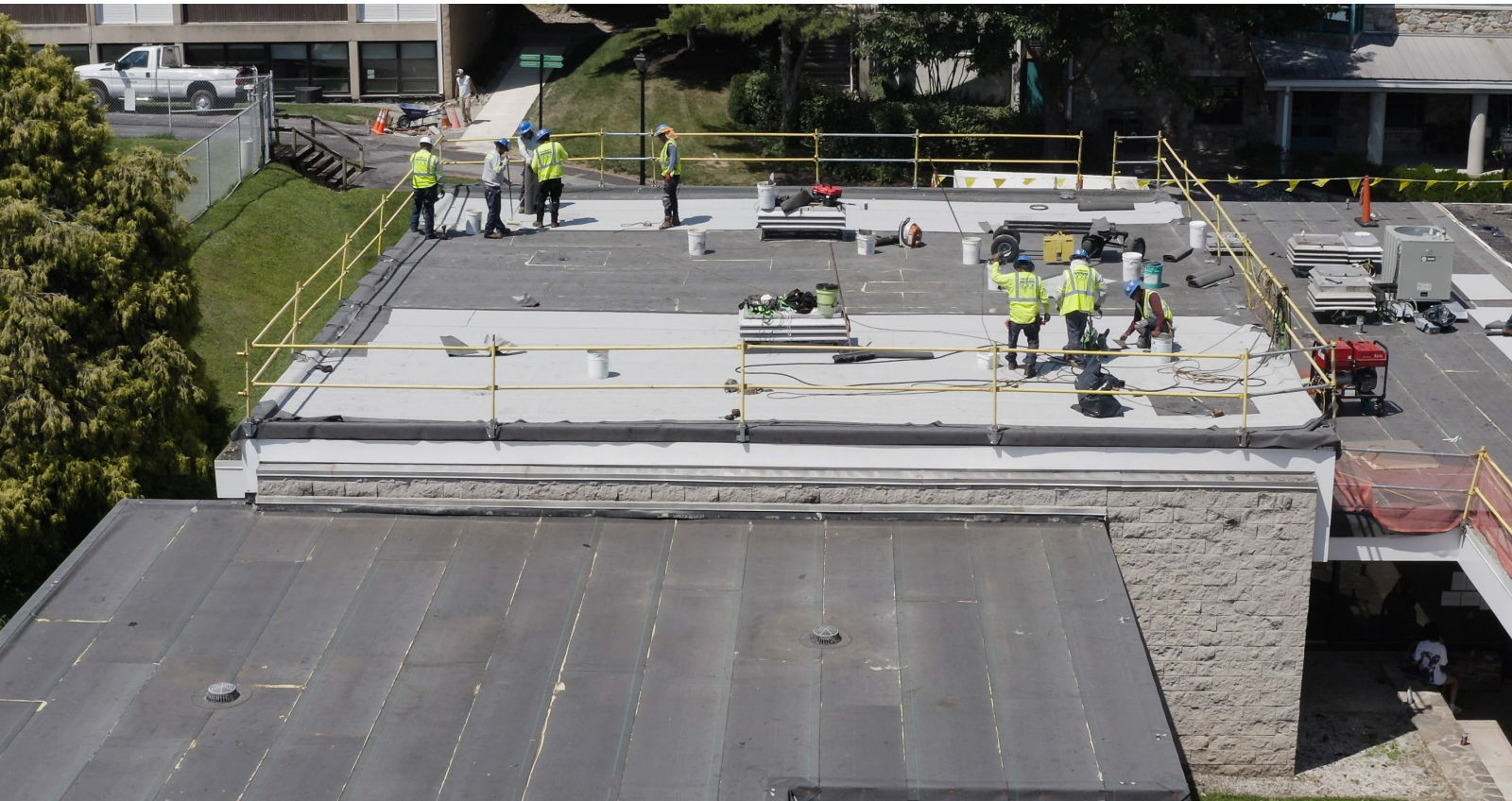
Varies



Medium
Install Time



Varies
Maintenance



✓ Making the Right Choice



You don't need to become a roofing expert — you need a roofing partner who already is.

At Nations Roof, we start by understanding:

- Your building's design and climate
- How the roof will be used
- Your risk tolerance and energy goals
- Your long-term budget expectations

Then we recommend a system that's durable, code-compliant, and cost-effective over its full lifespan.

What to Ask Your Contractor:

- Will this void my existing warranty?
- What is the expected lifespan and maintenance schedule?
- Are you certified by the system manufacturer?



HIGH-STAKES DELIVERY

When the Orlando Marriott World Center — one of the busiest hotels in the U.S. — needed 22 roof sections replaced, **Nations Roof completed the entire project in 180 days with zero guest disruption**, meeting all safety and noise constraints.



How to Protect Your Investment

EVEN THE BEST SYSTEM NEEDS REGULAR MAINTENANCE.

Without it? Warranties get voided. Small problems become expensive ones.



Our RoofCare Preventative Maintenance program includes:

- Scheduled inspections
- Debris removal and drain checks
- Documentation and photo logs
- Priority emergency dispatch

Proactive maintenance helps:

- Extend roof lifespan
- Avoid costly emergency repairs
- Maintain warranty eligibility
- Improve energy performance

Top 4 Signs of Trouble to Watch for:

- Ponding water lasting more than 48 hours.
- Discolored ceiling tiles indoors — often the first sign of leaks.
- Curling seams or flashing gaps on the roof.
- Excessive rooftop traffic paths.

Catching these early means lower repair costs and less disruption.



Partnering with Nations Roof



We help you:

- Choose the right system
- Maintain warranty eligibility
- Reduce emergency calls
- Access service history through your portal
- Get peace of mind with a 0.47 EMR safety record

Why Work with Us?



Certified Crews
Nationwide



One partner for repairs, maintenance, replacement, and emergency services



Responsive local branches backed by **24/7/365**
National Service Center



Secure customer portals for full documentation including **ServiceChannel, Corrigo, Building Engines, Emcor, fmPilot** and **Ariba**



About Nations Roof

Nations Roof helps commercial property teams protect their buildings and budgets with certified, full-lifecycle roofing services — from fast leak repairs and full replacements to long-term maintenance plans.

We're proud to serve:



Facility Managers



Property Owners
& Developers



Roofing
Consultants



Procurement
Directors



Building
Engineers



Store Managers

With offices across the United States and an industry-leading 0.47 EMR, we deliver National Coverage. Local Service. Trusted Results.™

Learn more at www.nationsroof.com



Let's simplify your roofing strategy — and protect your property with confidence.

Our team can evaluate your current system, plan your next step, and create a custom service plan that works for you — whether that means a sales conversation, a site visit, a service request, or just learning more.

Ready to get started?

- Schedule a site visit or inspection
- Request a quote for service or replacement
- Ask for a sales presentation or conversation
- Or just tell us what you need

Visit: www.nationsroof.com/contact



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