



## In This Issue...When A Roof Leak Isn't A Roof Leak

### What Do You Mean? A Roof Leak That Isn't A Roof Leak?

Many "roof leaks" aren't really roof leaks at all. **If you have an ongoing leak that roofers can't find after two trips it probably isn't a roof leak.**

While it is true that some actual roof leaks can be difficult to locate, if a roofer can't locate a leak quickly then you need to consider also the idea that the leak is possibly not roof related. It could be related to HVAC equipment, it could be related to some other kind of roof penetration, it could be a leaky masonry wall or chimney or it might be leaky windows. These things should be checked (probably not by the roofer) if there is anything in the area of the leak which isn't roof related.

The photo below shows a typical example of a roof leak not being a roof leak and money wasted on an unneeded repair. We would also like to point out that this shopping center is owned and managed by a very competent and experienced real estate company, yet they too were "victimized".

#### Example 1



When we surveyed this roof we noted that the roof was generally in very good condition and that there was virtually nothing required in the way of repairs. But this wall flashing was brand new, clearly installed within the past few months. The cost to install it would have been about \$4000.

We took one look at it and groaned. When we went down the ladder and checked inside we found exactly what we were expecting. Along the wall there were

ceiling tile missing or stained all along the wall. We said to the store manager, "I'll bet it is still leaking, isn't it?" It was. See, the problem wasn't the roof or the flashing, it was the wall. The roof repair was completely unnecessary. (And our fee for the whole shopping center was well less than that repair cost.)

The solution was to tuckpoint the wall and then waterproof the brick toward the rear and repaint the wall section toward the front.

#### Example 2

The HVAC unit shown below was retrofit after the roof had been installed and the curb on which it was installed was never insulated. So it can rain like a holy terror and not a drop of water will come in the building, but when the dew point is high and the air conditioner runs the ducts get cold and allow condensation to form on the duct walls and they drip and the roof appears to "leak". The roofer should know better, but evidently he didn't. Once the curb was properly insulated the problem disappeared. (The unit was not only not insulated, but also not flashed properly, but that is another story.)



These kinds of "leaks" are actually very common and we see very competent roofers making these same kinds of mistakes all too frequently.

So, to conclude, if the roofer doesn't fix your problem the second try, start considering the idea that it may not be the roof at all!