

South Florida HOME

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RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE LISTINGS INSIDE



A metal roof is generally considered to be more wind-resistant than shingles or tiles. (Photo courtesy of Istueta Roofing)

Metal roofs

Stronger, more wind resistant than the alternatives

BY JANA SOELDNER DANGER
Special to South Florida Home

There's a reason the old adage "having a roof over your head" has had such staying power over the ages. A solid roof represents shelter and security. In South Florida, a roof may also need to stand up to hurricane-force winds. A metal roof may do the job better than either asphalt shingles or tiles.

"Metal roofs have the best warranty on the market," says Frank Istueta, owner of Istueta Roofing in Miami. "It's the strongest system available and more resistant to high winds. It can take winds up to 150 mph, and some metals go higher."

"Metal roofs last a lot longer than other kinds," says Fred Burgos, Broward manager of Evans Roofing in Oakland Park, estimating the lifespan for a shingle roof at 18 years, a tile roof at 25 to 30 years and a metal roof at 50 to 60 years.



A metal roof is considered to be the strongest of the options, but it costs more than either shingles or tiles. (Photo courtesy of Evans Roofing)

TYPES OF METALS

Most residential metal roofs are made with either Galvalume or aluminum. Galvalume is a trademarked product invented by Bethlehem Steel, but the designation is often used to describe a generic product made up of a steel coil coated with a metal alloy that is 45 percent zinc and 55 percent aluminum, according to the Englert Architects website.

A Galvalume roof is likely to be less expensive than an aluminum one, but it probably will carry only a 30-year warranty, compared with an aluminum roof that may be warranted for 35 years, Istueta says. Other metal choices include zinc and copper. Copper is stylish and long-lasting, but it is much more expensive than aluminum. "A copper roof is a statement," Istueta says. "People do it because they like the look."

It's possible to get the look of copper without using it for the whole roof. "Some people use copper just for decorative details," Burgos says.

Yet another choice is Rheincink, a product manufactured in Germany, Istueta says. "It's a heavier material and a stronger clipping system."

INSTALLATION SYSTEMS

Metal roofs are generally attached by either a 5V crimp or standing seam system. "The 5V crimp is the cheapest, because the screws are exposed," Burgos says.

The eHow Home website describes the crimp system as



A metal roof may add to the resale value of a home. (Photo courtesy of Istueta Roofing)

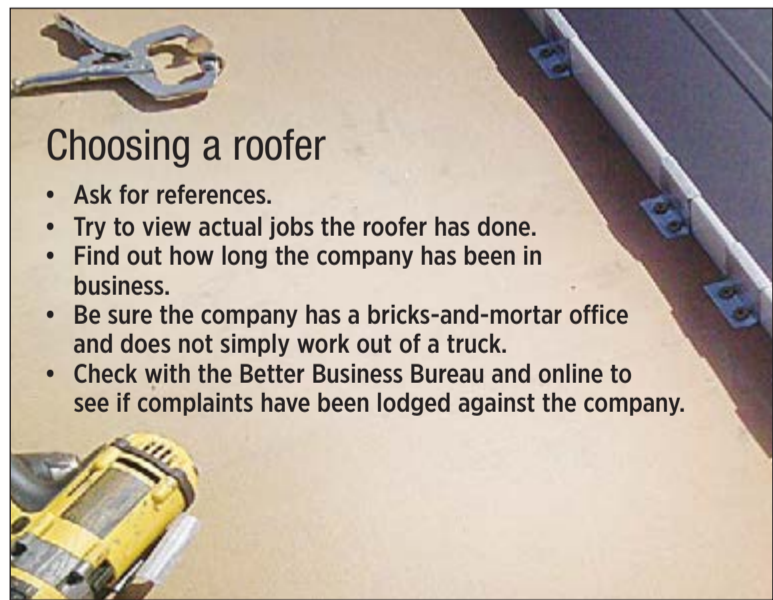
using metal panels with crimped edges that resemble side-by-side V shapes. Overlapping the panels, with the crimped edges sliding into each other, creates a waterproof seal, while screws hold the panels to the underlying sub-roof, the site says. According to the website About.com/home renovations, the standing seam system consists of continuous panels running from the ridge of a roof down to the eaves. Fasteners rising above the level of the metal roofing connect the panels, so there is a smooth, continuous ridge extending from top to bottom.

About 90 percent of the metal roofs Istueta installs use the standing seam system, he says, adding that the more fasteners the roofer uses, the better the system will be. "There's more labor and more material, but it will increase the strength."

The process of installing a metal roof involves first removing the old roofing, whether it is shingles or tile. Any damaged wood underneath will need to be replaced. Then the roofer will install two underlayments. Application of the metal follows the underlayments. "The process for installing a metal roof is more technical [than a shingle or tile roof], so be sure you have the right installer," Burgos says. "The cuts and corners of each piece have to be very accurate, and the overlays have to be very tight."

Choosing a roofer

- Ask for references.
- Try to view actual jobs the roofer has done.
- Find out how long the company has been in business.
- Be sure the company has a bricks-and-mortar office and does not simply work out of a truck.
- Check with the Better Business Bureau and online to see if complaints have been lodged against the company.



Clips are used to fasten a metal roof together. The more clips, the stronger the system. (Photo courtesy of Evans Roofing)

ADVANTAGES COME WITH HIGHER COST

A metal roof is low maintenance and may increase the resale value of a home. "A metal roof lasts longer and provides better protection," Istueta says. "It's also more energy efficient. Metal reflects the heat, so the cost to keep your home cool is less."

Metal may also be more eco-friendly than shingles, because it is less likely to go to a landfill, Istueta says. "The metal will be recycled, so it's environmentally responsible."

The advantages of a metal roof don't come cheap, however. Istueta estimates that a metal roof costs 25 to 30 percent more than tiles, and 70 to 80 percent more than shingles.

The wind mitigation insurance discount percentage is currently the same for any type of roof covering, whether it is shingles, tiles or metal, as long as the material and installation meet the Florida Building Code. So metal provides no advantage there. And because a metal roof increases the value of a home, insurance premiums for replacement coverage are likely to be higher.

MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

Homeowners considering a metal roof have one question they ask more often than any other, Burgos says. "They want to know if there is more noise on the roof when it rains. There's no difference, because you have wood underneath."



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