

Roofer

Tear off, dry in, shingle, flash. Hard money, earned outdoors, from your first week.

TYPICAL PAY

\$55,440

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$37k to \$82k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

up to 3 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

**House roofs, commercial flat roofs,
storm repair crews, service calls**

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Finish it if you can. Geometry, shop and a summer of labor work tell you in eight weeks whether you can stand the heat.
- 2 Get hired as a helper** 0 to 6 months
Tear-off, carrying bundles, cleaning the site. Show up on time for one season and you are ahead of most people.
- 3 Learn to install** 1 to 3 years
Underlayment, starter course, shingles, valleys, flashing, vents. Then the harder work: metal, tile and flat roof systems.
- 4 Registered apprenticeship, if there is one nearby** 3 years
The standard shape is paid work all year plus at least 144 hours of classroom time a year. Unions and larger contractors run them.
- 5 Lead or foreman** Year 3 onward
Measuring and ordering material, running a crew, dealing with the homeowner and the inspector.

Pros and cons

- + Paid from day one with no tuition and no debt
- + A finished roof every day or two, which you can point at
- + Easy to start your own crew with very little money
- It is genuinely dangerous, and falls are the reason
- Brutal heat in summer, lost days in rain and cold
- Very hard on knees, back and shoulders by your forties

Good to know

Falls are the thing that kills people

Roofing appears on almost every list of the most dangerous jobs in America, and the reason is always the same: falls from edges, ladders and through weak decking. Harness rules exist because of real numb...

A roof is measured in squares

The whole trade prices work in squares, and one square is 100 square feet of finished roof. A typical American house is roughly 20 to 30 squares, which is why an experienced crew can strip and reshingle o...

Optional boosts

Commercial flat roofing. Metal roofing. Torch safety certification. Estimating.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Roofers (47-2181.00)
National Roofing Contractors Association
NCCER: construction craft training and credentials
Apprenticeship.gov: United States Department of Labor

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/roofer>



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