



# ROOF RESTORATION VS RE-ROOF



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**Heidi J. Ellsworth:**

Hello, and welcome to Roofers Coffee Shop Lunch & Learn. We are here this month to bring you some amazing information about low slope restoration versus re roof. My name is Heidi Ellsworth and I'm the president of Roofers Coffee Shop, and I am here today with Johnny Walker, the national technical manager of ICP Roofing and Waterproofing Division. Johnny, welcome to this Lunch & Learn.

**Johnny Walker:**

Oh, thank you so much, Heidi, for having me. I appreciate it.

**Heidi J. Ellsworth:**

This topic is so important right now. It's always been there, but we are really looking at that next step in roofing, in the trade, in the craft, of how roofs are being restored, instead of just torn off. Before we get going with our questions for each of the learning objectives, I would love it, Johnny, if you would just introduce yourself again on your career in roofing, why you are such an amazing subject matter expert in this realm.

**Johnny Walker:**

Yeah, certainly. I started off years and years ago working for Empress Casino in Joliet, Illinois. Started out there as a facilities technician as a much, much younger man. Moved into a facilities engineer and of course, and then I moved into management, became a facility supervisor and manager there. With that facility, we had literally hundreds of thousands of square feet underneath roofing and we took care of everything, the maintenance department did, so we had to learn a lot. And every different type of roof out there has a different solution. Whether it be a mod bid, a single ply or a metal roof, there's different ways you go about repairing or restoring those systems. Moving from there, I went off and started my own restoration company where I did roofing and I was a VSI certified siding installer as well. A wide of experiences from the roof all the way down to the foundation and full restoration of entire homes.

Then I went off into distribution. I had an opportunity to become assistant manager and branch manager with distribution in the Illinois market and did that for several years and again, expanded my knowledge with different product lines across the spectrum. And then I decided to move to Florida. I got tired of the cold weather up in Illinois and it was quite nice to get out of there last night as the snow was starting to come in and come back to the warm weather here in Florida.

But coming to Florida, I jumped right in as an independent rep selling roof coatings, restoration systems, roof coating products throughout the market, and slowly ended up, I actually was a superintendent running coatings jobs with several roofing contractors throughout the area, and again, expanding my knowledge. And then eventually, came over to the APOC side, APOC Roofing and Waterproofing, coatings and restoration products, and started there as a district sales manager. And because of my technical background over the 13 years that I've been here, I've slowly just worked my way into full-time technical and now recently promoted to being the national technical manager.

**Heidi J. Ellsworth:**

Wow. That's a great story.

Johnny Walker:

A lot of experience.

Heidi J. Ellsworth:

Yeah. On all sides. A facility manager, a contractor, manufacturer's rep, sales, now working for one of the largest...

Johnny Walker:

[crosstalk 00:03:36] I've been on every aspect of it. Yes, absolutely.

Heidi J. Ellsworth:

That's excellent. That's going to make today's Lunch & Learn even better, I'm telling you. This is going to be great. So today on this Lunch & Learn, we're going to have three learning objectives. Number one, understanding roof restoration. Number two, understanding good roof candidates for restoration. Very important.

Johnny Walker:

Very important.

Heidi J. Ellsworth:

Very important. And number three, benefits to building owners, facility managers, and to you, the roofing contractors, for roof restoration projects.

Johnny Walker:

All too often, when people think of roof restoration, they think of coatings. Well, that's just one aspect of it. When we think of restoring a roof, what we're actually talking about is taking a roof that hasn't reached the end of its life, still has some usable life left, and prolonging its life through a thorough restoration. Going through all the different processes that there are to make sure that everything that needs to be addressed on the roof is addressed. Whether it be scuppers, drains, curbs, base flashes, penetrations, field seams, field damage, and so on. And then we actually apply the coating. Coating is absolutely part of that. It's reflective, it's protective and it lowers the energy cost, but additionally lowers the expansion contraction of the overall system. In that aspect, it can prolong the life as well.

Heidi J. Ellsworth:

How do you assess that?

Johnny Walker:

We generally do a thorough, thorough inspection of the roof. That's the first step. We're looking at the age of the roof. How old is the roof? That's going to give us an idea of what the membrane life might be, whether that be a single ply or a mod bit, for example. We look at the condition of all the things that I said before. The scuppers, the drains, the curbs, the base flashings, the penetrations, the field seams. And of course, building use is a huge thing for us. We want to know what's going on there. Is this a chemical plant? Is there anything in there environmentally that might affect a restoration? And of course, the makeup of the roof. We want to know exactly what type of roof is it, all the way down from

the deck all the way up. Is it a structural concrete deck, steel deck, maybe even a tectum deck. What insulation, if any? How many layers of insulation? How many layers of roofing? Potentially, it might have a two layers of roofing. These are all the things that we look at to determine if it's really viable for a restoration.

**Heidi J. Ellsworth:**

If it's not viable for a roof restoration, that's really important to know because you could actually be causing more problems.

**Johnny Walker:**

Yeah, absolutely. And if we find a roof that... Some of the things that might make a roof not a candidate, moisture content. Obviously, National Roofing Code says if a certain percentage of the roof is wet, well then you really should tear it off. We always recommend it, if we get to that point, they absolutely should tear it off. We never recommend a restoration over saturated roof deck. All of that wet material needs to come out. We're looking at that overall deterioration of the roof. Poor maintenance throughout its life. That's one thing where I pride myself in the industry is that, I'm not afraid to walk away from it. If it needs to be to turn off, so be it. If it can be restored, absolutely. I'm ready to go that way.

**Heidi J. Ellsworth:**

Yeah. And now that people are so much more aware of that option, hopefully they're catching roofs earlier, too.

**Johnny Walker:**

Yeah, absolutely. The last thing we want is somebody that has never touched their roof and now they want a 20 year restoration and that, in most cases, just isn't viable. It's just not going to happen. But if they've been taking care of the roof, proper maintenance throughout, absolutely. We can take those roofs and prolong the life and that being one of the huge benefits to the building owners.

A candidate for a good roof restoration is that roof that's not at the end of its usable life. It's not completely deteriorated. The field membrane is relatively in good condition. Generally, the leaks, we don't find through the field membrane, but if you go on a roof and the membrane's shot, well, you're probably not going to have a good chance at a successful restoration, but if the field membrane's good, then we're looking at the rest of those items. The scuppers, the drains, the curbs, the penetrations. That's where 90% of your roof leaks are going to start anyway.

If the overall condition is good, and on flat roof decks, we always try to do a moisture survey. We want to have somebody actually inspect that roof and look for that hidden moisture, the things you can't see by doing the visual inspection. And if we find out that a roof has less than 20% moisture throughout, meaning that less than 20% of the roof would have to be replaced, then that would be a good candidate. And usually we find that, in most cases, that our good candidates have even less than one or two or 5%. And of course, the really good survey companies will even let you know what the moisture content is within those suspect areas.

National Roofing Code says that you can have 5% in the membrane and 8% moisture in the insulation. We always look at all of that hard data and when we find that candidate that is in good condition, isn't at

the end of its lifespan, has a good moisture survey, a very low moisture contact within the system, that's a hundred percent that we're going to go ahead and offer them a restoration.

**Heidi J. Ellsworth:**

When I'm thinking about on those moisture surveys, because obviously what doesn't work is moisture, and so on those moisture surveys, can you talk just a little bit about, you're hiring out other people? Are you doing those yourself with core samples or with testing?

**Johnny Walker:**

Yeah, so generally, from my perspective of the industry, what I like to do is have that as an independent. IBEC has some great resources for certified thermographers and other guys who are certified. There's several different ways to do a moisture survey, not just infrared, and of course, infrared being the most popular because it's probably the least expensive and very easy to do, a lot of folks are actually doing drone surveys now, where they can use that drone to identify the anomalies and then go out and core. I like to have that with a certified third party, because generally, if I'm doing it, then it's on me. If a contractor's doing it, it's on him. The last thing I want to do is argue with my contractor about whether it was really dry or not. If I have somebody that's properly trained and insured and licensed to do these things, then we can rely on them to tell us that yes, they've done everything they needed to do and it's a good candidate.

Generally, when we're talking about a roof restoration, it's going to be about one third the cost of a complete tear off, and depending on what's being torn off and what you're putting back on or what you're restoring, that will vary slightly. But generally, that's the rule of thumb. We look at one third the cost. Very cost effective. The second thing is that it's the same type of warranties in a lot of cases. With a good restoration system where you're properly priming, properly patching it and properly reinforcing those areas that need to be, and again, then putting the reflective protective coating over the top, you can offer the warranties that range anywhere from 10 years, 15 years, 20 years, which are the same types of warranties they're going to get if they put a brand new roof on. So very low cost, same type of warranties can be available.

One of the other big thing is depending on the facility versus a tear off, no facility interruption. You're generally not tearing the entire deck off, depending on what's happening below the roof. That may be an issue where they actually have to stop production. Think of maybe a restaurant or some facility, a hospital. They have to shut that side of the hospital down while they're doing the full tear out. Generally, with the restorations, other than small repairs that they're doing, they're not tearing off entire sections of the roof. Additionally, no open roof, and of course here in Florida where it rains every day in the summertime, that's huge. That's a huge benefit, not just to the building owner, but the contractor, where they don't have that risk of liability of having massive amount of damage because they have large sections of the roof torn off at the time.

One more thing would be a tax benefit. When we think about a restoration versus a tear off, or even versus a roof over, restorations are considered maintenance items in most cases. You can think of that being something that could be written off for the building owner in the first year in its entirety versus having to be deferred, as most capital expenditures do.

**Heidi J. Ellsworth:**

Yeah. For the facility manager and the building owner, that's huge to put out there. And I want to go back just on one point you had too about destruction on the roof. With there being so much going on with tenants, apartments, buildings, hospitals, like you talked about, even odor and noise.

Oh, absolutely. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah and actually that's, when we talk about, I always teach the four Ps of proper restoration, which is prep, prime, patch and protect. We offer many products that can be used in very low VOC areas where the requirement is more water based, emulsion based type systems.

**Heidi J. Ellsworth:**

That's excellent. But how is that helping the facility management teams?

**Johnny Walker:**

Well, I think the best thing that helps the facilities management team is that the limiting of aggravation, like you talked about a condo association, something like that, where you've got potentially hundreds of tenants and all of them have to have a dry space. That knowing that you've got a quality restoration on there that can be easily maintained and repaired throughout its life, without massive interruption and massive headaches for the occupants of the building, that's one of the huge benefits for them.

**Heidi J. Ellsworth:**

With service and maintenance with a, I would think, a good facility management team, when they're working with good contractors who are doing roof restorations, they're also really working together compatibly on service and maintenance issues also.

**Johnny Walker:**

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Hand in hand. Anytime that you apply a roof restoration system, there's not a roof out there that you can apply and never step on it again and have any expectation of long life. We always recommend that those roofs be inspected twice a year. And we always recommend that our roofing contractors offer a maintenance agreement with the facility management team to come out and do that inspection and walk that roof and clean the scuppers and the drains and remove debris, look for physical damage, windblown damage. Additionally, not just twice a year, but if you've had a severe thunderstorm event, a tornado, earthquakes, hurricanes that have been in the area, that same contractor as part of their agreement will come out and inspect that roof. And that's a real relief to the facilities management team to not have to worry about, do I have a problem I don't know about yet?

**Heidi J. Ellsworth:**

Exactly. And to be able to easily understand what's happening up there, having continuous reports, inspections. That makes all the difference for peace of mind.

**Johnny Walker:**

Absolutely. Hundred percent.

**Heidi J. Ellsworth:**

We have all kinds of roofing contractors and roofing professionals watching this right now. What are the benefits of roof restoration for the roofing contractor?

Johnny Walker:

Well, I mean, I think one of the huge ones right now is potentially offering up a whole new segment of the market for you. If you are currently a contractor that's been doing a lot of tear offs or roof overs and you're having difficulties getting a hold of materials, the great thing with the roof restoration market is that most materials are readily available. Additionally, fast payouts. These processes are very fast and [inaudible 00:15:09]. Compared to a complete tear off, they generally happen in a week or two versus several weeks to a month or even longer, depending on the size of the facility. And of course, very limited liability. As we talked about, you're not tearing the entire roof off. You're not opening it up. You're not filling up dumpsters, dumpster after dumpster. So very green as well.

And of course, with that reduction in labor, much lower labor costs and potentially maybe higher profitability for the contractor in the overall, with the restoration versus the incomplete tear off, because there's just so much labor involved and excess expenses like the dumpsters, dumpster fees, hauling, and all of that has to happen. Literally with a restoration, the only thing that's going in the dumpster at the end of the day is probably some empty buckets.

Heidi J. Ellsworth:

Yeah, that's great. Well, and I just think, when you think about a roofing company and all parts of it, so you now, watching this, we have the front office, we have cells, we have estimating, we have purchasing. And so across the board, as they are having these conversations with their customers and with the building owners or the management groups, whatever it may be, to be able to come back and talk about what you are there, that this is green and it is more sustainable, that it is a better service plan. It's going to have a higher performance down the road because it's being checked all the time. Those kinds of key buzzwords as all these folks are talking to their customers really gives them something great to bring to the table.

Johnny Walker:

Absolutely.

Heidi J. Ellsworth:

As we wrap this up, would you just share a little bit about your product line, about what the types of coatings that you have out there, what you're doing, just give us a little bit of your elevator speech just so we can share that with everybody.

Johnny Walker:

Yeah, absolutely. The coating line that I represent is the APAC Roofing Restoration product line. Within that line, we have, of course, our silicons, our high solids silicone coatings, 98% solids. One of the highest solids, if not the highest solid sub content in the market. We have a wide range of good, better, and best acrylic coatings. We have our emulsion coatings, our aluminum coatings, thermoplastic coatings. And of course, along with each one of those systems, we have all of the sundries. The masks, [inaudible 00:17:31] and the repair products, the tapes, the self adhered tapes, the caulks, the sealants, everything that you could possibly need. Additionally, we've done an incredible job... Actually, during COVID, well, we had to have something to do. We created probably about 80 videos that go over individual details, exactly what you need to do for each step. We've really streamlined the process and made it simple. We have a tremendous product line, but we also have a tremendous team here at APOC and ICP.

Heidi J. Ellsworth:

You do. You have a great team. To wrap that up, besides of course, that they can find all of this, that everybody watching this can find all the information on Roofers Coffee Shop, in your directories and throughout the many articles and videos that we have on the site from ICP and APOC, how would contractors... How do they get ahold of you and how do they really start exploring this roof restoration with you and with the company?

Johnny Walker:

Sure. The easiest way to get ahold of me, or to get ahold of any of our information, is to go to our website at apoc.com or visit us on our Facebook page and LinkedIn at APOC Roofing and Waterproofing. You absolutely, go to our contact page, reach out. If you're looking for technical information, this is the guy that's going to get a hold of it.

Heidi J. Ellsworth:

I love it. Johnny, thank you. Thank you so much.

Johnny Walker:

Thank you so much for having me.

Heidi J. Ellsworth:

For all this great information, what a great bite and thank you all for watching this Lunch & Learn. Don't forget to use your discussion sheet and talk about this. Talk about how you can bring more roof restoration into your business and how it will work with your customers. It's all part of that discussion sheet and it's all part of Roofers Coffee Shop Lunch & Learn. One last time, Johnny. Thank you so much for being here.

Johnny Walker:

Thank you, Heidi. Thank you so much and God bless everybody. Have a wonderful, wonderful day.

Heidi J. Ellsworth:

Ah, awesome. And thank you all. We'll see you next time on the next Roofers Coffee Shop Lunch & Learn.