

The background of the image is a commercial rooftop. In the foreground, there is a large, jagged hole in the concrete floor. A pipe is leaking water from this hole, creating a splash. To the right of the hole, there are several large stacks of US dollar bills, some of which are scattered on the ground. In the background, there is a satellite dish and a large HVAC unit. The sky is overcast and grey, with several hundred-dollar bills falling from it. The text is overlaid on the top half of the image.

**THE 5**  
**MONEY**  
**MURDERING**  
**MISTAKES**

**ON COMMERCIAL ROOFS**

## **THE HIDDEN COSTS SITTING ON YOUR ROOF**

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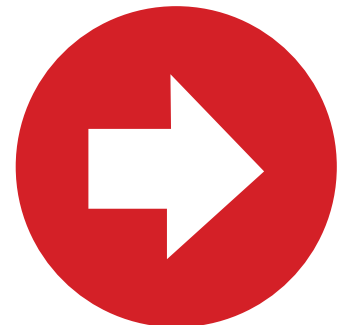
**Commercial roofs are one of the most expensive assets on a building, yet they are often the least understood and least managed. Many building owners assume that if the roof isn't actively leaking, everything is fine.**

**Unfortunately, the biggest financial damage to commercial roofs usually happens long before a leak ever appears inside the building.**

**Small oversights, uncontrolled access, and delayed maintenance can quietly shorten a roof's lifespan by years and lead to avoidable repairs, interior damage, operational disruptions, and premature replacement.**

**This guide highlights the five most common and costly mistakes building owners make with commercial roofs—and how simple management practices can prevent them.**

***LET'S GET INTO IT!***



# MISTAKE #1: SKIPPING ANNUAL INSPECTIONS

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Most commercial roofs fail from neglect, not age.

Skipping annual inspections of commercial roofs can lead to hidden damage going undetected, resulting in accelerated deterioration, higher repair costs, and increased operational risks. Regular inspections help identify minor issues—such as membrane punctures, flashing failures, ponding water, or sealant degradation—before they escalate into structural damage, interior leaks, or business disruptions. Without routine oversight, small maintenance items often compound over time, reducing the roof's service life and potentially voiding manufacturer warranties or insurance coverage.

## **Consequences of Skipped Annual Roof Inspections:**

- **Undetected leaks and moisture intrusion** leading to mold growth, insulation damage, and interior repairs
- **Accelerated membrane and flashing deterioration** from unresolved minor defects
- **Higher long-term repair and replacement costs** due to deferred maintenance
- **Reduced roof lifespan** and premature system failure
- **Voided manufacturer warranties** for lack of required documentation
- **Increased liability and safety risks** from structural weakening or falling debris
- **Insurance claim complications or denials** due to poor maintenance records
- **Business disruption** from emergency repairs or interior damage

## MISTAKE #2: IGNORING DRAINAGE ISSUES

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Ponding is not “normal.”

Ignoring drainage issues on commercial roofs allows water to accumulate, which significantly increases structural stress and accelerates roof system deterioration. Poor drainage—whether caused by clogged drains, undersized scuppers, improper slope, or debris buildup—leads to ponding water that degrades membranes, saturates insulation, and infiltrates building interiors. Over time, this excess moisture compromises structural components, increases energy costs, and heightens the likelihood of emergency repairs. Proactive maintenance of roof drainage systems is critical to preserving roof performance, extending service life, and avoiding costly operational disruptions.

### **Consequences of Ignoring Roof Drainage Issues:**

- **Ponding water** that accelerates membrane breakdown and seam failure
- **Saturated insulation** reducing thermal performance and increasing energy costs
- **Structural loading stress** from standing water that can weaken decking and supports
- **Interior leaks and water damage** to ceilings, walls, equipment, and inventory
- **Mold and microbial growth** due to prolonged moisture exposure
- **Premature roof system failure** and shortened lifespan
- **Voided warranties** if drainage maintenance requirements are not met
- **Increased repair and replacement costs** from compounded damage
- **Business interruption risks** from emergency leaks or structural concerns

## MISTAKE #3: ALLOWING UNCONTROLLED ROOF ACCESS

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Unsealed penetrations are one of the top causes of leaks.

Uncontrolled access to commercial roofs by other trades (e.g., HVAC, electrical, telecom, solar, signage, etc.) can create significant risks for building owners and roofing systems. When workers who are not trained in roofing systems access the roof without proper coordination, they may unintentionally damage membranes, flashings, or drainage components, leading to leaks, premature roof failure, and costly repairs. Additionally, unsupervised activity can compromise safety protocols, create liability issues, and void manufacturer warranties if work is performed improperly. Establishing controlled access procedures and requiring coordination with roofing professionals helps protect the roof system, maintain warranty compliance, and reduce long-term maintenance costs.

### **Negative Consequences of Uncontrolled Roof Access:**

- **Roof membrane damage:** Foot traffic, dropped tools, or equipment placement can puncture or tear roofing membranes.
- **Compromised flashings and penetrations:** Other trades may modify or disturb roof penetrations without proper sealing.
- **Voided manufacturer warranties:** Unauthorized alterations or repairs can invalidate roofing warranties.
- **Water intrusion and leaks:** Even minor damage can allow water infiltration that leads to interior damage and mold.
- **Blocked or damaged drainage systems:** Materials or debris can obstruct drains and scuppers, increasing ponding risk.
- **Increased liability and safety risks:** Untrained personnel working on roofs may create fall hazards or unsafe conditions.
- **Accelerated roof deterioration:** Improper walk paths or equipment installation can shorten the roof's service life.
- **Higher long-term maintenance costs:** Small, unnoticed damages often escalate into major repair or replacement expenses.

## MISTAKE #4: DELAYING MINOR REPAIRS

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Small flashing issue today. Interior mold remediation tomorrow. Delaying minor repairs on commercial roofs can quickly turn small, manageable issues into major and costly problems. What may begin as a small puncture, loose flashing, or minor seam separation can allow moisture to enter the roofing system, leading to insulation saturation, membrane deterioration, and structural damage over time. Because commercial roofing systems are designed to function as a complete waterproof assembly, even small defects can compromise overall performance if not addressed promptly. Timely maintenance and repairs help extend the roof's service life, preserve manufacturer warranties, and prevent avoidable operational disruptions and expenses.

### **Negative Consequences of Delaying Minor Roof Repairs:**

- **Water infiltration:** Small defects can allow water to penetrate the roof system and spread beneath the membrane.
- **Insulation saturation:** Moisture trapped in insulation reduces thermal performance and can lead to widespread roof damage.
- **Interior damage:** Leaks can damage ceilings, walls, equipment, and building contents.
- **Mold and indoor air quality issues:** Persistent moisture can promote mold growth within the building envelope.
- **Accelerated roof deterioration:** Minor issues often expand into larger membrane failures or system degradation.
- **Higher repair costs:** Problems that could be fixed with minor repairs may require extensive repairs or partial replacement.
- **Operational disruptions:** Leaks or damage may interfere with building operations, tenants, or equipment.
- **Reduced roof lifespan:** Deferred maintenance shortens the overall service life of the roof system.
- **Potential warranty concerns:** Failure to maintain the roof properly may impact manufacturer or contractor warranty coverage.

## MISTAKE #5: OPERATING WITHOUT DOCUMENTATION

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No inspection records. No photo reports. No condition baseline. You can't manage what you don't measure.

Operating a commercial roof without proper documentation—such as inspection records, photo reports with video links, and an established condition baseline—makes it difficult for building owners and managers to effectively manage roof performance over time. Without documented inspections and visual records, small changes or emerging issues can go unnoticed until they become major failures. A lack of historical data also limits the ability to verify warranty compliance, plan maintenance budgets, or determine responsibility for damage caused by weather events or other trades. Consistent documentation provides accountability, supports informed decision-making, and allows stakeholders to track roof condition and maintenance needs throughout the roof's lifecycle.

### **Negative Consequences of Operating Without Roof Documentation:**

- **No established condition baseline:** Without initial documentation, it is difficult to measure deterioration or track changes in roof condition over time.
- **Undetected developing issues:** Small problems may go unnoticed until they develop into leaks or system failures.
- **Poor maintenance planning:** Lack of inspection history makes it harder to prioritize repairs and forecast maintenance budgets.
- **Limited accountability:** Without photo or video documentation, it can be difficult to determine when damage occurred or who may have caused it.
- **Warranty complications:** Manufacturers often require inspection and maintenance records to maintain warranty coverage.
- **Inefficient troubleshooting:** When leaks occur, the absence of historical documentation makes diagnosing the root cause more difficult.
- **Reduced asset management insight:** Building owners lack the data needed to make informed decisions about repair versus replacement.
- **Increased long-term costs:** Delayed detection and reactive maintenance typically result in more expensive repairs.

## PROTECT YOUR BUILDING'S MOST OVERLOOKED ASSET

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Your commercial roof protects everything inside your building - your tenants, equipment, inventory, and operations.

But without proper oversight, it can quietly become one of the **largest sources of unexpected capital expenses**.

A professional roof management approach helps building owners:

- Extend roof lifespan
- Reduce repair costs
- Maintain warranty compliance
- Prevent interior damage
- Plan long-term budgets with confidence

## SCHEDULE A PROFESSIONAL ROOF ASSESSMENT

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If you're unsure about the condition of your commercial roof, the best place to start is with a **documented roof inspection and condition assessment**.

A professional inspection provides:

- Detailed roof condition report
- Photo documentation with video references
- Identification of existing damage and risk areas
- Repair recommendations and maintenance priorities
- A baseline record for future monitoring

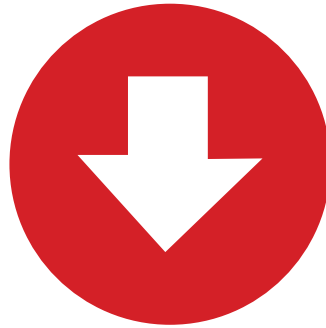
**CALL 651-447-7886**

**STILLWATER, MINNESOTA  
COMMERCIAL ROOFING EXPERTS**



# **TAKE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD BETTER ROOF MANAGEMENT**

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**Schedule your commercial roof assessment today and gain the information you need to protect your building and your budget.**

**Stillwater Roofing - Commercial Roof Specialists**

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