

New Roof Construction vs Roof Replacement: Key Differences for Austin Homeowners

If your home needs a new roof, the first question is usually whether you are looking at new roof construction vs roof replacement. The two sound similar, but they involve different processes, timelines, and costs. In Austin, where the climate swings from scorching summers to sudden hailstorms, getting this decision right matters more than in many other markets. I have worked on both types of projects across the city, and the choice often comes down to what is underneath the shingle.

New roof construction means building a roof where none existed before, or where the existing structure is completely removed down to the framing. Roof replacement, on the other hand, typically involves tearing off the old shingle and underlayment, inspecting the deck, and installing new materials on the existing rafters. The distinction affects everything from permits to warranties. Let me walk through the real differences I see on the job site.

Process and Scope

With new roof construction, you are starting from scratch. That means setting the roof pitch, cutting angled rafters, and installing OSB decking before any weatherproofing goes on. I have been on jobs where the architect specified a complex hip-and-valley design that required custom flashings and a ridge vent to handle Austin's humidity. The framing crew has to coordinate with the roofer early, because the spacing of the rafters determines where the roofing nails will land later.

Roof replacement is more straightforward in terms of structure. The crew strips the old shingle, replaces any damaged underlayment, and inspects the OSB decking for rot or delamination. In older Austin homes, I have seen decking that was nailed with ring-shank nails that barely hold after twenty years. The roofer will pull those and re-fasten with new roofing nails. But the underlying rafters stay put unless there is rot. That limits your ability to change the roof pitch or add a skylight curb without major reframing.

Timelines and Labour

New roof construction takes longer because the framing and roof deck are built in sequence. A typical 2,000-square-foot roof in Austin might take five to seven days just to frame and deck, then another three to four days for the roofers to install underlayment, flashings, and shingle. Add in scaffolding if you have a steep roof pitch or a two-story house. The labour is heavier on the front end.

Roof replacement moves faster. A good crew can strip and re-shingle a similar footprint in three to four days, provided the weather cooperates. But the timeline can stretch if the OSB decking needs replacement, which happens more often than homeowners expect. I have been on jobs where the old decking had moisture damage around the ridge vent or at the valleys, and we had to cut out sections and re-sheet before the new underlayment could go down. That adds a day, maybe two.

Costs in the Austin Market, 2026

Local conditions drive the price difference. For new roof construction, you are paying for more materials, more labour hours, and often more complex design work. The framing package alone can run 30 to 40 percent higher than a straight replacement because you are buying lumber, OSB decking, and fasteners that a replacement does not require. Disposal costs also add up: a new construction project generates scrap lumber and packaging, while a replacement produces old shingle and underlayment that goes to the landfill.

A roof replacement in Austin typically costs between 6,500 and 10,500 dollars for a standard asphalt shingle roof on a single-story home, depending on the roof pitch and the number of flashings. New roof construction often starts around 12,000 and can climb to 20,000 or more if you add features like copper flashing, a synthetic membrane for low-slope sections, or solar-ready mounting brackets. The Austin permit fee is higher for new construction too, because the city requires structural engineering review. A replacement permit focuses on the roofing work itself, not the framing.

Permits and City Code

Every roof job in Austin that exceeds a simple repair needs an Austin permit. For new roof construction, you need a full building permit that includes framing, sheathing, and roofing inspections. The city code requires that the roof pitch and structural loads meet current energy code and wind-uplift standards. I have seen plans get bounced because the architect forgot to spec the ridge vent properly for the attic ventilation requirements.

For roof replacement, the permit is typically a re-roof permit, which is simpler. But the city code still requires that you meet current underlayment standards and flashings details. If your roof has low pitch, you might need a synthetic membrane instead of standard shingle to pass inspection. And if you are adding a skylight curb during the replacement, that triggers a separate permit because it changes the roof opening. The inspector will check that the roofing nails are the right type and that the flashings at the valleys and chimneys are installed to code.

Design Decisions You Only Get Once

One thing I tell every homeowner in Austin is that new roof construction gives you freedom that a replacement never will. When you are building from the rafters up, you can choose the roof pitch, add a ridge vent, install skylight curbs where you want them, and plan for solar panels or a second-story addition later. You can specify copper flashings if you like the look and longevity. You can even orient the roof to capture the best light for solar-ready panels. Those decisions are locked in once the deck goes down.

With a roof replacement, you are stuck with the existing roof pitch and rafter layout. You can change the shingle color or switch from asphalt to synthetic membrane on a low-slope roof, but you cannot move a ridge vent or add a skylight without cutting into the existing framing. That is why I always ask homeowners: do you see yourself wanting to change the roof shape, add living space, or install solar in the next ten years? If yes, new roof construction is the better long-term play.

Warranties and Longevity

Warranties differ between the two approaches. A new roof construction typically comes with a longer workmanship warranty from the roofer because the entire system is installed on fresh materials. The shingle manufacturer will offer a full warranty on the shingle itself, and the roofer will cover the underlayment, flashings, and ridge vent for at least ten years, often longer. The OSB decking comes with its own structural warranty from the mill.

For roof replacement, the warranty usually covers the roofing work and materials, but it often excludes the existing decking and framing. If the old OSB decking delaminates five years later, the roofer may not be liable because the deck was not part of the new work. That is why I always recommend that homeowners pay for a full deck inspection during a replacement. If the decking is questionable, factor in the cost of replacing it. It is cheaper to do it during the replacement than to tear off a brand-new roof later.

Which One Should You Choose?

The decision between [new roof construction vs roof replacement](#) comes down to your home's current condition and your future plans. If your roof structure is sound and you just want to update the shingle and underlayment, a replacement is the cost-effective route. Most Austin homes built after 1990 have decent framing and OSB decking that can handle another thirty years with proper maintenance.

But if your home has structural issues, if you are adding a second story, or if you want to change the roof pitch or add a ridge vent for better attic ventilation, new roof construction is worth the extra cost. I have seen too many homeowners try to save money with a replacement

on a failing structure, only to call us back a few years later for a full tear-off. The labour and disposal costs double when you work in stages.

Talk to a local roofer who understands Austin's climate and code requirements. Ask them about the specific flashings and underlayment they recommend for your roof pitch. And get a written estimate that separates the cost of framing, decking, and roofing materials. That way you can compare new roof construction vs roof replacement apples to apples. The right choice for your home is the one that keeps your family dry and your investment solid for decades.