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WATER TEST CHECKLIST

So you have a leak, but don't know where it's coming from?

Here's what you should do:

Assess the leak:

- Talk to someone that has knowledge of the leak, when it happened, circumstances, rain/wind/snow
- See what can be done to control or minimize damage from leak. (See below)

Manage the leak:

- If water is currently leaking in, take some steps to manage the situation, reducing damage and minimizing negative impact to the ceiling, walls, floors, and/or electrical or house furnishings.
- Bring out a bucket or garbage can and place below the leak area. A tarp or plastic also could be helpful in the attic space above the leak if accessible.
- Consider poking a hole in the ceiling if it appears water is being trapped, and building up under/behind drywall, so as to drain build up.
- Consider running a string from the area of entry, attached with a nail or screw, and down into bucket, or the like, to gain control of water coming in.
- If you can cover the outside area with a tarp, either yourself, or a professional, you may be able to temporarily stop, or minimize, the intake of water, and subsequent damage.

Set up water test:

Tools needed:

- Water hose and spray nozzle - long enough to reach problem area
- Two fully charged cell phones
- Two people
- Extension ladder - for outside with tie offs and weight to put behind ladder: i.e. bags of sand or blocks to keep ladder from kicking out
- Step ladder - for inside
- Moisture meter if possible
- Scaffolding, and/or harness and rope

Process for finding unknown entry points of a siding for roofing leak:

- When area is dried out, set up safe access to your roof. You may use either a ladder tied off with weights laid at base to avoid kicking out, or possibly climb out a window to the roof, as in dormer or a joint section.





- Set up, and bring a hose onto the roof in the affected area. Be sure to have a spray nozzle that is adjustable to manage water flow, intensity and direction.
- Have someone stationed inside the home where leak occurs. This person should have good soft sole shoes, flashlight, marker and a cell phone, along with the ability to carefully climb over ceiling joists if needed.
- Spray area with hose, starting low and moving up, and moving up slowly with person inside to call when water comes in.
- The idea is to find the entry point or points of the leak. If the leak isn't obvious it is often because of all the hidden things that could be causing the leak such as flashing, flat walls, windows, and Valley tines.
- The trick is to create a controlled artificial rainstorm that will compartmentalize the pieces of the puzzle. The best way to do that is simply to start spraying as low as possible in the affected area and work your way up the roof and siding and windows etc., in a slow calculated manner, until you get the reaction expected, a leak.
- Be ready with hose and phone and work till you get the call from your cohort inside the home.
- At that point, start timing how long until the dripping stops inside.
- Now start again lower down then when it showed up. It may have started lower, but not showed up till it made the trip to the inside, through insulation, or drywall, and the like. When you start again, you will work slowly back up to the area until it leaks, and repeat the process, timing the delay, and starting again until you close in on the point, or points of entry. It is worth noting it will likely still be hidden, but at least it is clear where to start, and what not to bother with. Also, you could have leaks further up than the first one found. It may be a process to get it fully fixed. If possible try to temporarily divert water from the lower leak discovered, to find possible higher ones.
- Note: if it only leaks in wind driven rains, it is a higher chance of being the siding or
- window leak.
- Person inside should mark off entry points, and make notes if access to attic was possible. This can help with the clarity of where the trouble is and how to describe it to the person who will be tasked with pulling it apart to fix it.

Water leak identified:

- Water leak identified, take immediate action to help minimize damage to your home before a professional can take a look:
 - Tarp off hole
 - Use buckets to catch water
 - Open windows in problem area of the home on dry days to dry out rafters
 - Mark spot with an x with a sharpie so easy for others to see





- Record where the problem is happening, when it started, what type of conditions it leaks under (think about past work on your home)
- Take a video or picture of exactly where the leak is happening
- Now that the leak is identified and you've mitigated unnecessary damage as best as possible you can call a contractor to take care of the issue.
- Sometimes sealant takes care of problems at joints or nails, but usually it is necessary for a full pull apart to permanently solve this type of leak problem.
- If it is steeper on the roof, you will want to set up some scaffolding and tie offs possibly with harnesses and railing systems to be safe. If you are going to do it yourself, you may want to watch some videos on how to set up for safety.
- My personal recommendation would be to hire a professional, as the danger is very real and even possibly, life-threatening.

Either way, happy hunting, and good luck!

