

# Residential Roof Inspection Checklist

A guide from Independent Roof Inspections

This checklist is based on the inspection points used by Independent Roof Inspections' senior inspectors. Our senior inspectors are licensed and have a minimum of 10 years' trade experience. Independent Roof Inspections is also a member of Master Builders Queensland and Master Builders Association NSW.

## Before You Start

Do not climb onto your roof to use this checklist. Most items can be checked safely from the ground, from a ladder at gutter height, or from inside the roof space if you have safe access. If anything looks unclear, that is exactly what a professional inspection is for.

## Roof Coverings

*Look across the whole roof for anything that breaks the pattern.*

- Cracked, chipped, slipped or missing tiles.**  
These can let water into the roof cavity, especially during wind driven rain.
- Rust spots, corrosion or lifting on metal roof sheets.**  
These may point to ageing sheets, loose fixings or areas where water is sitting.
- Sagging sections.**  
Sagging can suggest movement underneath the roof covering and should be checked properly.
- Moss, lichen or heavy debris build up.**  
This is common on shaded sections and can hold moisture against the roof surface.
- Loose or exposed fasteners on metal roofing.**  
Loose fixings can create small entry points for water during heavy rain.
- Rusty or deteriorating fasteners on metal roofing.**  
Rust from fasteners can spread onto the sheeting and into gutters, shortening the lifespan of the roof.
- Antennas or mounts on metal roofing.**  
Corroding antenna bases and fixings are a common source of rust that spreads across sheeting and into gutters over time.

## Gutters and Downpipes

*A walk around the house after rain can tell you a lot about how well they are draining.*

- Sagging or pulling away from the fascia.**  
This can stop water draining properly and may place extra strain on the fascia.
- Rust, splits or holes, especially at joins.**  
Small gaps can leak water onto walls, fascias or areas around the home.
- Overflow staining on the fascia or wall below.**  
This can be a sign that gutters are blocked, undersized or not draining properly.
- Leaves, branches or sediment build up.**  
Debris can cause gutters to overflow during heavy rain.
- Blocked, disconnected or poorly draining downpipes.**  
Downpipes should move water away from the home, not let it pool near the foundation.

## Roof Flashing and Penetrations

*Flashings are where most leaks start, so look closely anywhere metal meets the roof covering.*

- Lifted, cracked or rusted flashing around chimneys, vents, skylights and pipes.**  
Flashing seals these junctions, so any gap can give water a path underneath the roof covering.
- Sealant that is cracked, shrunk or missing around penetrations.**  
Sealant has a limited lifespan, and once it fails, water can find its way through small gaps.
- Flashing at the junction between the roof and any walls or parapets.**  
These junctions rely on flashing to stay watertight, and movement over time can open small gaps.

## Ridge Capping and Hip Capping

*On tiled roofs, capping is usually bedded in mortar, which can crack or loosen over time.*

- Cracked or loose mortar bedding on tiled roofs.**  
Mortar can deteriorate with age and weather, allowing capping to shift.
- Capping that has shifted or lifted.**  
This can expose the ridge or hip line to wind and rain.
- Visible gaps where capping meets the roofline.**  
Gaps here can let water and debris into the roof space.

## Roof Valleys

*Valleys carry a lot of water during heavy rain, so small blockages can become a problem quickly.*

- Leaves, dirt or debris sitting in the valley.**  
Build up can cause water to back up under the roof covering instead of running away.

- Rust or corrosion on valley metal.**  
Corrosion can weaken the valley and create small holes over time.
  - Staining or wear along the valley line.**  
This can be an early sign that water is not draining as it should.
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## Roof Space

*If you can safely access your roof space, a quick check with a torch can reveal early signs of a leak.*

- Daylight showing through gaps that should not be there.**  
Any gap that lets light in may also let water or pests in.
  - Damp insulation, timber or sarking.**  
Dampness can indicate an active leak, even if it has not reached the ceiling yet.
  - Water stains on the underside of the roof or on ceiling joists.**  
These often appear well before staining is visible from inside the house.
  - Signs of pests.**  
Gaps that let pests in are often the same gaps that let water in.
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## Internal Warning Signs

*Ceilings and upper walls are often the first place a slow leak becomes visible.*

- Water stains or discolouration on ceilings, particularly after rain.**  
This is usually one of the clearest signs that water is getting through somewhere above.
  - Bubbling or peeling paint on ceilings or upper walls.**  
This can point to moisture sitting behind the surface for some time.
  - Musty smells in rooms near the roof space.**  
This can be a sign of a slow leak that has not caused visible staining yet.
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## Storm Damage Checks

*After a storm, it is worth a quick check even if everything looks fine from inside.*

- Any new debris, branches or dents on the roof.**  
These can damage tiles, sheeting or flashing on impact.
- Dislodged tiles, ridge capping or flashing.**  
Strong wind can lift or shift these even if the rest of the roof looks fine.
- New staining in the gutters or on the fascia.**  
This can indicate water has overflowed or found a new path during the storm.
- Any change in how water drains off the roof during the next rain.**  
A change in drainage pattern can point to a new blockage or damage from the storm.

### Want a professional opinion?

This checklist helps you spot visible warning signs, but it does not replace a full roof condition report. Our licensed inspectors are 100% independent, do not carry out repairs, and will give you an honest picture of your roof's condition.

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