

Roofing Career Path Exploration

Thomas Anglin and Edward J. Lazaros

Center for Information and Communication Sciences, Ball State University

tanglin@bsu.edu and ejlazaros@bsu.edu

Introduction

This article provides factual information for those interested in a career in roofing. Useful information, such as pay and benefits, have been provided in this article to help those trying to decide if a roofing career is a good fit. Details regarding this career will be presented in the following order: responsibilities, how to become one, pay and benefits, job outlook, and an interview with a current roofing professional.

Responsibilities of a Roofer

A roofer maintains, inspects, repairs, and replaces the roofs of residential homes and commercial buildings (Better Team, 2021, para. 1). The U.S. Department of labor (2021) further specifies responsibilities of roofers to include installing insulation to protect buildings from weather. A roofer will need to document repairs performed and conditions of a roof (Skills Provisions, 2020). Roofers work outdoors under various weather conditions, and they may work limited hours during winter months in colder climates (U.S. Department of Labor, 2021).

How to Become a Roofer

In order to become a roofer, applicants must be willing to learn the necessary skills to properly install and maintain roofs. According to the U.S. Department of Labor (2021), a roofer will often receive on the job training to learn the trade, since no formal education is required.

Apprenticeships are available to teach new roofers installation techniques, quality management, material selection, roof inspection processes and roof installation skills (Career Explorer, 2021, para. 4). The wide variety of roof types means that it may take years for a roofer to become competent for all job scenarios. Certifications are available to demonstrate competency and knowledge of specific aspects of roofing (Stuart, 2020, para. 1). Experience is required in order to sit for many of the certification exams.

It is important for a roofer to be comfortable working at great heights for an extended period of time. A roofer relies on excellent balance when working on steep roofs to avoid falls (U.S. Department of Labor, 2021). Other useful skills for a career in roofing include good attention to detail when following blueprints, basic math skills, manual dexterity to handle roofing materials, and the physical strength to lift materials and necessary tools (Stuart, 2020, para.5).

Pay and Benefits

According to the U.S. Department of Labor (2021), the median yearly wage for a roofer was \$43,580 in May 2020. Salary.com (2021) reports a median annual wage of \$36,743 for roofers in April 2021. The typical pay range for a roofer as of April 2021 was between \$33,168 and

\$41,154 (Salary.com, 2021). The pay and benefits of a roofer can vary based on experience, certifications, and location.

Job Outlook

The U.S. Department of Labor (2021) predicts a growth in roofing jobs from 161,600 in 2019 to 165,400 in 2029; this equates to a 2% job growth over the ten-year period. Career Outlook (2021) predicts a job growth from 160,600 roofing positions in 2018 to 179,000 jobs in 2028. This data indicates a stable employment market for those entertaining a career in roofing.

Interview with Steven Daniel Walden from McGuff Roofing, Inc. of Muncie, Indiana which offers roof installation and repair services. They are located at 610 E Wyser Street. in Muncie, Indiana. They can be reached at (765) 808-0854. This interview was completed by Dr. Edward J. Lazaros on June 3, 2021. The interview along with the responses are listed in the following sections:

Figure 1: Steven Daniel Walden pictured in front of a contractor's truck



1. What previous experience prepared you for this position?

“When I was younger, I started working construction. I started doing this ever since I graduated high school. I started out doing painting and then worked for some brick layers. In 1993, I transitioned to roofing” (Steven Daniel Walden, personal communication, June 3, 2021).

Figure 2: Steven Daniel Walden pictured in front of a ladder that allows access to the roof that he is working on replacing.



2. What does a typical workday look like for you?

“We get up about 4:30 AM in the morning and figure out if we are going to work based on the weather. Everything is based on the weather. We meet at the shop and gather materials and fill up our water jobs. We drive to the job site which sometimes can be an hour away. We work between 8-12 hour days depending on how things go. If we are there later than that, things typically haven’t gone well” (Steven Daniel Walden, personal communication, June 3, 2021).

Figure 3: Steven Daniel Walden pointing at the rain clouds that often impact when they are able to work on roof jobs.



3. What is your favorite part about your daily work?

“Being outside is my favorite part! I also like how the scenery changes. Once we finish a job, we start at a brand new location. We never get tired of being in the same place” (Steven Daniel Walden, personal communication, June 3, 2021).

Figure 4: Steven Daniel Walden pointing at a new PVC roof that was just installed



4. What are the main challenges you encounter with your daily work?

“The main challenge is the weather. When it starts getting hot, rain can pop up out of no where. Having to coordinate with other trades can also be a challenge at times. Getting people to work can also be a challenge” (Steven Daniel Walden, personal communication, June 3, 2021).

Figure 5: Close-up picture of the new PVC roof that was just installed.



5. What kinds of fun technology do you get to use?

“We have a welder that does long laps for us. It is robotic and just needs to be guided. The laps are heat welted sections of roofing, which are ten feet each. Each seem has a three inch lap. The robot heats the roofing material to 1148 degrees and welds the two sections together. We

can set the robot to different materials and also make adjustments based on the temperature and weather” (Steven Daniel Walden, personal communication, June 3, 2021).

6. What advice would you give someone who would like to get into this career?

“You have to have a good work ethic. You have to be able to get up in the morning to be able to be at work at 4:30AM in the morning. This is a great way to make a living and you can move up quick. If you want to learn and work hard, you can move up the ladder quickly. I became a roofing foreman in just two years due to the turn over rate. There is also an apprenticeship program that people should consider. For example, our registered apprenticeship program is through an organization called ABC. There is a curriculum that people follow. The apprenticeship program allows someone to get their apprenticeship card” (Steven Daniel Walden, personal communication, June 3, 2021).

Conclusion

A roofer helps maintain, inspect, repair, and replace the roofs for commercial and residential buildings. Those who decide to pursue a career in roofing will have the opportunity to learn on the job. The projected job growth for roofing professionals in the years to come indicates a stable job market.

References

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