

Roofing Repairs Questions and Answers

Why are roofs being repaired?

Roofing repairs are ongoing at the TDSB to help ensure a safe work and learning environment for our staff and students.

Why are you doing it during the school year?

Over the next three years, the TDSB will be working on hundreds of roof projects to help maintain our buildings. Roofing projects need to be done during the day and in good weather. Where possible, we will try to complete as much work as possible outside of school hours. Due to the volume of roof repairs, they cannot be limited to the summer and must be completed year round. It would be impossible for us to complete the high volume of projects during the busy summer months, simply because there are not enough qualified roofing contractors to complete such a high volume of work at the busiest time of the year for roofing projects. Unlike other school boards in Ontario, the TDSB has a large inventory of aging facilities with roofs beyond their life expectancy, which require expedited replacement to prevent further negative impacts related to water infiltration.

How are the roofs repaired?

Roof repairs involve using layers of felts and hot-applied asphalt. The asphalt is heated in roofing kettles which generate odours from fume and vapour emissions. At times, the odour can be very strong, but generally do not pose a health hazard.

What should I expect during repairs? Should I be concerned?

Roof repairs take between two and four weeks to complete depending on the size of the school. During this time, you can expect to smell the asphalt, especially near the kettle where the asphalt is heated. At times, the odours may be strong but generally do not pose a health concern.



What safety precautions does the TSDB take?

To reduce discomfort during this project, the roofing contractor is required to:

- Locate the roof asphalt heating kettle away from doors, windows and fresh air intake
- Ensure that all air intake openings are closed and, if necessary, seal them
- Ensure that the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system is put in to recirculation mode so no outdoor air is introduced. Where this isn't possible, portable fans may be provided
- Request that all windows and doors, remain closed especially those downwind from the kettle
- Review the Material Safety Data Sheets to ensure all listed precautions are in place

What can school staff do during the roof repair?

- Keep classroom windows closed
- Set window air conditioner to recirculate air
- Dress appropriate for the weather in case the building's heating and cooling system needs to be shut down
- Keep students and parents informed

I smell roofing asphalt, my head aches and I feel nauseous. Is this a short term problem or can it result in chronic health issues?

The effects of roofing asphalt fumes are usually mild and temporary, but can be headaches, dizziness and nausea. Symptoms should resolve themselves within hours after exposure to the odour has ended.

I am pregnant. Will this affect my baby?

No, because of the low exposure, the risk to the baby is very low. Please review with your supervisor any accommodations required in your work schedule or location.





I have breathing problems. Can inhalation of roof asphalt odours aggravate my condition?

Individuals with medical conditions should avoid inhaling roofing asphalt emissions as they may aggravate their condition. Please review with your supervisor any accommodations required in your work schedule or location.

How do I address concerns during a roofing project?

1. Speak to your principal about any health concerns
2. If you require accommodation, please work with your supervisor

