Roof Leak First Steps Checklist

What to do when water comes through the ceiling, and what to tell the roofer.

1. In the first hour

- ☐ Buckets and towels under every drip; move furniture and electronics away
- ☐ Bulging ceiling? Turn off power to that area, then make a small hole at the lowest point to drain it into a bucket
- ☐ Do not go on the roof in the rain
- ☐ Call a roofer for an inspection and, if water is still getting in, a tarp

2. Photos to take (dated)

- ☐ The ceiling stain and the drip
- ☐ The attic above the leak, if you can reach it safely
- ☐ The outside of the roof from the ground, each side
- ☐ Any damaged belongings

3. Notes for the roofer

Question	Your answer
Where does the water show up?	
Only in heavy rain, in any rain, or on dry days too?	
Which direction was the wind blowing?	
Roof type and age (permit date if known)	
Any recent storm, roof work, AC or plumbing work?	

4. Rule out other sources

- ☐ AC air handler in the attic: check the drain line and pan
- ☐ Windows and doors near the stain
- ☐ Plumbing: a stain on dry days points to pipes
- ☐ Cracked stucco on the outside wall

5. After the visit

- ☐ Ask for the cause in writing, with photos
- ☐ If a storm caused it, report the claim to your insurer promptly
- ☐ Keep receipts for tarping and drying out

Don't wait for the next storm. A small leak soaks the insulation and roof deck each time it rains. General guidance only.