



# EPDM Roofing Tips

## Comparing EPDM and Felt for Garage Roofing

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## Comparing EPDM and Felt for Garage Roofing



When the time comes to replace a garage roof, many homeowners look to a professional roofer to install a felt replacement.

A felt roof (or tar paper roof) is a traditional material that has been a popular choice in the UK since the 1950s. It is applied typically using a hot, bituminous substance to glue the felt to the surface and secured by mechanical fixing, or by using a torch down method of application if the felt is pre-coated.

The UK's garage roofing is commonly flat, which is traditionally notorious for leaking and pooling.

As many people use their garages for storage, not just for vehicles, making sure it is watertight is a high priority to protect the goods inside.

The modern alternative to a traditional felt garage roof is to apply a rubber roof system. The rubber roof is easier to apply and is often tackled by the DIY roofer.

Rubber roof systems, such as EPDM, are cold-applied using water-based adhesives and rollers. This means that application is made much safer, and this is one of the reasons the DIY roofer selects this type of system to install at home.

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## What is a rubber roof?

Permaroof's Firestone EPDM rubber roof systems consist of a single piece of sheet membrane that can be installed straight onto a garage roof deck of wood or concrete.

EPDM can also be installed over traditional roofing, such as felt, if it is clear of debris and any loose flaps of felt have been removed.



As a rubber roof membrane is typically laid in a single sheet, there are no joins present once the installation is completed. This ensures a comprehensive cover with none of the vulnerabilities that the joins on a felt roof present. If there are rooftop extrusions in the garage roof, such as a chimney flue pipe or a flat roof skylight, for example, then the latest rubber roof systems include accessories that can give an effective seal around them.

## Is rubber roofing more expensive than felt?

Rubber roofing requires a slightly bigger investment than a felt roof, which is probably the cheapest system available. However, a larger investment in the initial application of the garage roof will pay off significantly over the long term.



EPDM rubber roofing systems carry a life expectancy of more than 50 years, and a felt roof, if installed correctly and to a high standard may last for up to a maximum of 10 years and will need regular maintenance to ensure it stays in place.

It is very easy to see how the price compares over the long term, and how EPDM systems outperform outdated felt roofing to give considerably better value for money.

Another cost consideration must be the labour cost of installation. Felt roofing often requires professional installation, due to the nature of the hot application process.



EPDM rubber systems can be installed by a handy DIY homeowner in under a day on average, which removes the labour element of the project in terms of cost.

Even when EPDM systems are applied by a professional, trained EPDM installer the labour costs are significantly cheaper.

## Aesthetic value of EPDM roofing

Once applied, EPDM rubber roofing is aesthetically pleasing from the very start, and once trims are installed, there is barely a difference between a professional installation and a good DIY job.



Over time, EPDM maintains its good looks and is UV-resistant so will not fade in colour.

Felt roofing quickly wears and is highly susceptible to weathering.

This diminishes the aesthetic value of garage roofing and reduces its effectivity.

EPDM can also provide an excellent base material for a green roof system, effectively waterproofing the roof deck and protecting it from the increased water retention of the layers and planting medium.

Felt roofing is unsuitable for green roofing as it does not carry the same waterproofing properties, particularly where joins are to be found. Water can still seep through felt roofing in these vulnerable areas and cannot offer the same resistance.



Green roofing methods are increasing in popularity across the UK as sustainability grows higher on the wish list for many homeowners. A green roof system is possibly one of the most aesthetically pleasing for garden buildings.

## Maintenance comparisons of EPDM and felt

EPDM rubber systems offer 100% waterproofing and once applied, can be left alone for decades with just a visual inspection required a few times a year to ensure there is no damage.

Tough and durable, a rubber roof on your garage is going to last, look great and perform to an extremely high standard, unlike felt roofing which once failed, can lead to catastrophic damage.

Felt roofing requires close scrutiny, particularly after spells of inclement weather. Joins may need to be re-sealed every couple of years to ensure continued waterproofing and where it has been mechanically fixed to the garage roofing.

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## Where to buy EPDM for garage roofing

Permaroof UK Ltd offers the country's DIY and trade roofers a wide range of options for EPDM garage roofing. With award-winning customer service and teams that contain qualified and experienced roofers, we understand exactly what the flat roofer needs.



The introduction of the garage roof kit has led to a significant increase in the uptake of EPDM systems for this type of project. Buying a garage roof kit makes quotations simpler for trade roofers, and the process of ordering and quantifying materials easier for the DIY roofer.

Permaroof garage roof kits are available in a wide range of standard sizes, and a custom-cutting service is available for non-standard-sized roofing. By using this service, both trade and DIY garage roofers can benefit from the creation of a bespoke kit containing everything needed to successfully apply an EPDM roof.

EPDM is fast-becoming the roofing industry's answer to sustainability and will probably become the most common alternative to a felt roof in the UK.

## Permaroof UK Ltd

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