

Inspect Your Roof with the I.O.U. Method.

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As homeowners, many of us see the end of a heavy storm as our cue to head outside and clean up the yard. We stand the garbage cans back up, clear fallen branches, and make sure our trees, shrubs, and gardens haven't taken a beating.

But it's important to remember that the worst storm damage isn't always the easiest to see. You may have to go looking for it. During storm season, be prepared to inspect your roof periodically. The earlier you identify roof damage, the sooner you can contact a qualified roofing contractor to provide necessary repairs before the next storm rolls in.

Not sure what to look for? Just use the I.O.U. method: Inside, Outside, Up the ladder.

Inside: Begin in the attic, if it's accessible, during the daytime. Use a flashlight wherever necessary.

Look For	Possible Causes	Urgency	
Sunlight showing through the plywood	Holes in the deck	☆☆☆☆	Holes are serious causes of leaks and water damage.
Dark stains or streaks	Moisture from rain or poor ventilation	☆☆	Speak with a qualified roofer to determine the cause.
Sagging	Weakening of the deck, from moisture	☆☆☆☆	This can be a sign of a structural problem and should be looked at by a qualified roofer.



Outside: Walk around your house, examining as much of the roof as you can see from the ground for signs of damage, like these:

Look For	Possible Causes	Urgency	
Missing shingles	Wind damage	☆☆☆☆	Missing shingles should be replaced as quickly as possible.
Cracked or curled shingles	High winds or flying debris	☆☆	Speak with a qualified roofer to determine if a repair or reroof is best for your home and budget.
Dark patches	Granules have come off of the shingle	☆☆	Granules protect the underlying asphalt from weather, including UV rays. Without them, the shingle may dry out and crack.
Debris	High winds	?	A branch on the roof may not be a big deal at all, or it may be covering a crack that it caused as it landed. Either way, over time, it can rub the granules loose from your shingles, so it's important to keep your roof clear of debris.
Bent or detached flashing	Flying debris	☆☆	Flashing helps keep water from chimneys, vents, and other roof penetrations and should be thoroughly sealed to prevent water intrusion.



Up the ladder: If you are comfortable climbing a ladder and the weather conditions allow you to do so safely, you can get a better look at your roof up close. Look for:



Look For	Possible Causes	Urgency	
Loose nails	Wind	☆☆☆	Loose nails or nail heads raised above the shingle surface may be just one storm away from letting go entirely.
Gutter debris	Wind	☆	Clogged gutters can contribute to ice dams later in the year. Your roofing contractor may provide gutter cleaning services if you are not comfortable doing the job yourself.

Climb safely or not at all: When using a ladder, remember the three-point rule: keep two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand, on the ladder at all times. Keep ladders — and yourself — away from power lines. Remember: wet branches conduct electricity, too. If you are not completely comfortable using a ladder, wait for a professional. For more in-depth roofing safety information, visit OSHA at www.osha.gov or the National Roofing Contractors Association at www.nrca.net.

If you find damage: Call a local, reputable roofing contractor right away. After storms, you may receive solicitations from unfamiliar contractors looking for work. To find reputable, factory-certified contractors in your area, visit the GAF Contractor Locator at: <http://www.gaf.com/roofing/contractors>.

The sooner you address storm damage to your roof, the more secure your roof, family, and valuables will be for the next storm.