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## Survey, Research Confirm EPDM Roofing Membranes Last 38 Years

**569 roofing professionals and four decades of laboratory testing validate exceptional durability of properly installed EPDM systems.**

[Roofing Contractor Staff](#)

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A comprehensive new survey of 569 roofing professionals combined with extensive laboratory research confirms that properly installed and maintained EPDM roofing membranes routinely deliver at least 38 years of service life — with many installations exceeding 40, 45, and even 50 years.

The findings, [released by the EPDM Roofing Association \(ERA\)](#), represent the most extensive analysis of EPDM service life to date, and coincide with 2025 European laboratory research that pushes projections even further. The renowned German SKZ laboratory, commissioned by VESP, tested four EPDM membranes from leading brands using High Pressure Autoclave Testing and tensile strength analysis per extrapolated via an Arrhenius model. The results confirm that all membranes tested exceed a service life of at least 70 years under normal conditions of use.

The [2025 ERA survey captured insights](#) from 240 roof consultants, 150 system designers and architects, 128 contractors, and 51 other professionals with extensive experience evaluating and installing EPDM systems across North America. Their reports of the oldest EPDM membranes still in service paint a picture of exceptional longevity:

- 16 percent report encountering EPDM roofs over 45 years old still performing
- 26 percent report encountering EPDM roofs 35-45 years old still performing
- 23 percent report encountering EPDM roofs 25-35 years-old still performing
- 22 percent reported encountering EPDM roofs 20-25 years-old roofs still performing.

"The convergence between what professionals see in the field and what research in the laboratory confirms is remarkable," said Dev Barpanda, Ph.D., president of ERA. "These aren't marketing projections — they're documented findings from professionals who inspect roofs daily and researchers who have tested membranes for decades."

Those field observations and the 2025 SKZ study are reinforced by decades of laboratory data. A 2010 ERA study tested five membrane samples with 28 to 32 years of in-service life and found all exceeded tensile strength standards for newly manufactured membranes — and continued to meet ASTM standards after accelerated aging simulating 40 years of service. A 2004 German study by Das Kunststoff-Zentrum tested 39 samples installed for up to 30 years, finding 38 of 39 met minimum performance requirements with no visible material damage. North American research the same year confirmed all tested membranes with 17 to 26 years in service remained watertight and functional.

Survey respondents emphasized that installation quality is the key variable. "EPDM is a very durable product that can last up to 40 years when it's properly installed and maintained," said one participating roofing consultant. "Most failures we've seen come from improper installation — not material deterioration."

"What makes EPDM unique is how consistently field performance exceeds laboratory-tested performance standards," Barpanda added. "Properly designed and installed systems routinely deliver three to four decades of reliable service, with many installations far exceeding that."

For building owners, facility managers, and specifiers, the combined body of anecdotal and scientific evidence points to EPDM as an exceptional long-term roofing investment with reduced lifecycle costs and minimal maintenance demands.



*Roofing Contractor* editor-compiled stories, staff reports and industry news releases.

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