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New Survey and Research Confirm EPDM Roof Membranes Last At Least 38 Years

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

WASHINGTON, D.C. – March 18, 2026 – 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 today by the EPDM Roofing Association (ERA), represent the most extensive analysis of EPDM service life to date and are reinforced by 2025 European laboratory research. Germany's SKZ laboratory, commissioned by VESP, tested four EPDM membranes using high-pressure autoclave testing and tensile strength analysis, with results extrapolated using 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 roof system designers and architects, 128 contractors, and 51 other professionals experienced with 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., Chair 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.

“This work represents the broadest and most comprehensive review of the long-term performance of any single-ply roofing membrane ever undertaken,” said Ellen Thorp, Executive Director of ERA. “We brought together field experience from hundreds of roofing professionals, decades of laboratory testing, and external published research to examine EPDM from multiple perspectives. Taken together, the findings tell a remarkably consistent story about the long-term service life and durability of EPDM.”

Survey respondents emphasized that installation quality is the key variable. “EPDM is a very durable product,” 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.”

“When we considered all of this evidence together, we were able to establish an expected service life for EPDM of at least 38 years,” Thorp said. “That figure is averaged across different membrane thicknesses and installation methods and assumes the roof is properly designed, installed, and maintained. It is intentionally a conservative number, particularly when you consider the number of EPDM roofs that continue to perform well beyond 40 years.”

For building owners, facility managers, and specifiers, this body of field and scientific evidence points to EPDM as an exceptional long-term roofing investment with reduced lifecycle costs.

Additional information is available on the [EPDM website](#). [EPDM Photo available here](#)

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About the EPDM Roofing Association: ERA is the unified voice of EPDM roofing manufacturing companies, committed to providing resources, expertise, and advocacy to advance EPDM roofing systems throughout North America. For more information, visit epdmroofs.org.