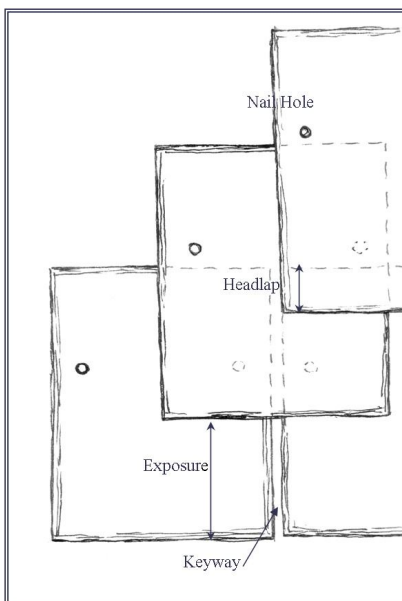




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Understanding Slate Roofing



To understand how a slate roof works you first need to know the parts and terms

Nail Hole- each slate is (typically) punched at the quarry with two nail holes about a third of the way down from the top

Headlap- the amount of slate that will have triple overlap. Standard Headlap in the United States is 3.”

Exposure- the amount of slate that will actually be exposed to the elements. Length of the slate minus 3” (headlap) divided by two.

Keyway- the small amount of space between the slates, usually about ¼” to ½.”

The Traditionally Hung¹ Slate Roofing System was designed centuries ago before the use of underlayments. This method of roofing allows the *slate* to protect the structure while shedding water and elements. The overlapping system prevents water penetration by funneling the water to the course of tiles below with a triple overlap yet still allowing the structure to breath. The physical weight also plays a part in the design of a roof. Each tile’s weight holds down the rows below while also preventing wind uplift in strong storms.

Installing a slate roof begins at the bottom of the roof with a starter course. Each additional row of slate is laid on top of the subsequent row making sure that the keyways do not line up or come within 3” of each other from one row to the next.

¹ New companies have come out with modified ways of installing slate. They use the slate as a decorative feature and not as a protective and fundamental feature of the structure.

Every slate is hand nailed onto the roof with either copper or stainless steel nails. The slate should be able to wiggle slightly in the need for replacement of tiles.

Slate size is important with regards to the proportion of the structure. Single size installation will have one size slate for the field of the roof. Random Slate Roofs will have the same length for each tile and different widths.

Additional Slate Roof Terms

Starter Course- The initial row of slate that provides the support for the first exposed row. These slates are the same size as the field slates yet laid on their sides. With a minimum of 3” headlap. This row of slate will be completely covered by the first row.

Hip/ Ridge- The rows of slate that will be used on the top course of the structure. These rows overlap from side to side.

Slate Hook- These are used to hold a replaced slate. Either copper or stainless steel. They are about 4” long and nail into the roof deck with a hook on the end holding the slate in place.

Bib- A piece of metal that is used to cover the nail hole when a replacement slate is installed.