

Why Corrugated Metal Roofing Remains a Top Choice for Austin Homeowners

When I first started working in the roofing trade back in the early 2000s, the go-to material for most residential jobs in Central Texas was asphalt shingles. That has shifted dramatically over the last 20 years. More and more homeowners in Austin, TX, are asking about metal roofs, and the two systems that come up most often are standing seam and corrugated metal roofing. Both have their strengths, but corrugated metal roofing has a long track record in agricultural and industrial buildings that makes it especially appealing to people who want something rugged and straightforward.

I have installed both types on houses in the Hill Country, and I can tell you that the choice often comes down to budget and the look you are after. Standing seam panels offer clean, vertical lines and hidden fasteners. Corrugated metal roofing, with its familiar wavy profile, gives a more utilitarian appearance that some homeowners love for a modern farmhouse or a workshop. But the real story is in the performance data, the material science, and the installation details that determine whether your roof will last 20 years or 70.

What Makes Corrugated Metal Roofing Different

The term "corrugated" refers to the wavy profile that gives the panels their stiffness. That shape allows the metal to span longer distances between supports than a flat sheet could. Most corrugated panels used in residential work are made from 26-gauge steel, which is thick enough to resist dents from hail and foot traffic during installation. The steel is usually coated with a zinc-aluminum alloy called galvalume, which provides corrosion resistance far better than plain galvanized steel. On top of that, many manufacturers apply a baked-on paint system such as Kynar paint, which holds its color and resists chalking in the intense Texas sun.

I have seen houses in the Austin area with corrugated metal roofs that are 40 years old and still watertight. The manufacturers now talk about a lifespan of 40-70 years for metal roofs, and that is realistic if the material is installed correctly and the panels are not physically damaged. The key factors are the quality of the substrate, the fasteners, and the flashings. A roof is only as good as its weakest connection.

Fasteners and Underlayment Matter More Than You Think

One of the most common mistakes I see on older corrugated jobs is the use of cheap screw fasteners that rust out after a few years. The right fastener has a neoprene or rubber gasket under the head that compresses against the metal to seal the hole. Over time, those gaskets can dry out and crack if they are exposed to UV. That is why many installers now use fasteners

with metal caps that shield the rubber. I prefer to spec fasteners from a reputable brand like Amerimax or an equivalent that matches the panel coating.

Below the panels, a metal roof underlayment is critical. In the old days, roofers would lay corrugated metal directly over purlins with no underlayment, and the roof would sweat. Moisture would condense on the underside of the cold metal and drip onto the insulation or the ceiling. Modern practice calls for a vapor-permeable underlayment that lets any trapped moisture escape while blocking wind-driven rain. Products from GAF and Duro-Last work well here, but the specific brand matters less than the installation details. Every lap must be sealed, and the underlayment must be tied into the flashings at the eaves and ridges.

Wind and Fire Performance in Central Texas

Austin gets its share of severe thunderstorms and the occasional tornado warning. Wind uplift resistance is a real concern. [Corrugated metal roofing](#) panels are mechanically fastened, which gives them better resistance to uplift than some adhesive-applied membranes. The panels are stiff, and the fasteners create a strong mechanical bond to the structure. I have seen standing seam roofs that perform even better in high winds because the clips allow the panels to expand and contract without losing hold. But a well-fastened corrugated roof with the proper screw pattern will handle the wind loads we see here.

Fire rating is another area where metal roofs shine. Austin is in a region with periodic wildfire risk, especially on the western edge of town near the Balcones Canyonlands. Corrugated metal has a Class A fire rating, meaning it will not ignite or spread flames. That is a major selling point for homeowners in the Wildland-Urban Interface. The metal itself is non-combustible, and the underlayment can be selected to meet local fire codes. I always recommend a fire-resistant underlayment for projects in the Hill Country.

Energy Efficiency and Cool Roof Options

One objection I hear from homeowners is that metal roofs get hot in the summer. That is true if you use a dark-colored panel. But the same galvalume coating that resists corrosion also reflects a good portion of the solar radiation. Many manufacturers now offer a cool roof coating that meets ENERGY STAR requirements. These coatings are usually white or light gray, and they can lower the surface temperature of the roof by 30 degrees Fahrenheit compared to a dark asphalt shingle. That translates to lower attic temperatures and less load on the air conditioner.

In my experience, a light-colored corrugated metal roof with a cool roof coating will perform about the same as a standing seam roof with similar reflectivity. The energy efficiency difference between the two profiles is negligible. What matters more is the insulation below the

roof deck and the ventilation of the attic space. I have seen houses with dark metal roofs that stay comfortable because the roof has a proper radiant barrier and ridge vents.

Cost Per Square Foot and Material Choices

Corrugated metal roofing is generally less expensive than standing seam. The cost per square foot for the panels themselves can be 20 to 30 percent lower, and the installation labor is simpler because the panels are screwed directly to the structure. For a typical 2,000-square-foot roof in Austin, you might pay 30 to 50 percent more for standing seam than for a comparable corrugated system. That difference is partly due to the hidden clips and the specialized tools required for standing seam.

If you are building a shop, a barn, or a house with a simple gable roof, corrugated metal roofing is a practical choice. The material is widely available from suppliers like Metal Sales and Bristolite. You can get it in 26-gauge steel with a galvalume substrate and a Kynar paint finish in dozens of colors. The panels come in lengths up to 40 feet, which means fewer end laps and fewer potential leak points. I always try to order panels long enough to cover the entire roof slope in one piece.

Longevity and Maintenance

The expected lifespan of a corrugated metal roof is 40 to 70 years, depending on the environment and the quality of the installation. In Austin, the main threats are UV radiation, which breaks down paint coatings over time, and acid rain, which can accelerate corrosion if the metal is exposed. A galvalume substrate with a Kynar paint finish will hold up much longer than a cheap painted panel. I have seen 50-year-old corrugated roofs on old farmhouses that still look good because they were maintained. The owners washed off debris, replaced a few fasteners, and painted the panels when the coating began to fade.

One maintenance item that is often overlooked is the rubber gaskets on the fasteners. After 15 or 20 years, those gaskets may start to crack. A good roofer will replace the fasteners as part of a reroofing job, but if you are just doing a repair, you can tighten the existing fasteners carefully. Over-tightening will distort the gasket and cause leaks. I always use a torque-limited screw gun for metal roofing work.

Choosing Between Standing Seam and Corrugated

If you are building a new house or replacing an old roof, the decision between standing seam and corrugated metal roofing often comes down to aesthetics and budget. Standing seam gives a cleaner, more modern look with hidden fasteners. It also handles thermal expansion better because the panels slide on clips. Corrugated is more affordable, easier to install, and

has a proven track record in tough environments. Both systems can be made from the same materials: 26-gauge steel, galvalume, and Kynar paint. Both can achieve a Class A fire rating and good wind uplift resistance.

I have used both on my own projects. For a detached workshop, I chose corrugated panels because the budget was tight and the look fit the building. For the main house, I went with standing seam because the roof had multiple hips and valleys, and the standing seam system handled the complex geometry better. Each job has its own requirements, and a good contractor will help you choose the right system for your specific conditions.

Final Thoughts

Corrugated metal roofing is not the flashiest option on the market, but it is a workhorse. It offers excellent longevity, fire resistance, and energy efficiency at a reasonable cost per square foot. If you live in Austin, TX, and you want a roof that will stand up to hail, heat, and high winds, corrugated metal is worth a serious look. The key is to use quality materials from trusted suppliers like Metal Sales or Bristolite, specify a proper metal roof underlayment, and hire an installer who understands the importance of correct fastener spacing and gasket care.

A well-built corrugated metal roof will protect your home for decades. I have seen it happen over and over. And when the paint starts to fade in 30 years, you can recoat it. The metal underneath will still be sound. That kind of durability is hard to beat.