

# Skylight Leakage by Finn Home Inspectors

Every roof penetration is a potential water leakage point, chimneys, vent pipes etc. Skylights are particularly prone to leakage.

Where's the leak? If you see stains on the inside bottom of the skylight, it is likely just from condensation on the glass that ran down. If you see stains or damage on the ceiling around the skylight its more likely a water leak from the roof. Many roof leakages depend on certain weather conditions, usually rain, rain intensity, wind direction often is very important. The stains seen around a skylight may be from a combination of weather conditions.

Surprisingly it does not have to be raining to leak, see diagram below, in norther climates poor venting and insulation around/below a skylight can create an ice dam induced leak which typically would be at the lower edge of a roof.

If your replacing your roof shingles the best choice is to eliminate the skylight, but many people like the light and we advise replacing the skylight when re-shingling. Flashings are often the source of the leakage and over time most skylights glass seals fail causing fogging of the glass, a 20 year old skylight is not likely to last much longer.

Below are diagrams showing how insulation and air flow should be in a house, (Art from Carson/Dunlop)

