



Leading the Butyl Revolution with Flash Deck[®]

How Advanced Chemistry is Turning Outdated Asphalt into the New “Tar Paper”

From the Roofers' Advantage Technical Library

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The roofing industry is evolving toward high-performance chemistry, making the switch to butyl-based technology a vital move for any forward-thinking contractor. Unlike traditional asphalt-based underlayment that can become brittle in the cold or bleed in the heat, butyl represents the next generation of protection by maintaining flexibility across extreme temperatures and creating a permanent "gasket" seal around every fastener.

By becoming a **Flash Deck[®] Underlayment Specialist[™]**, you transcend the role of a standard installation contractor to become a recognized expert in advanced building envelope solutions. This first-of-its-kind butyl certification provides a powerful competitive edge, signaling to high-end clients that you are a market leader dedicated to solving the inherent weaknesses of older standards with superior, future-proof technology.

Lessons from History: The Great Underlayment Evolution

To understand where the roofing market is headed, we only have to look at where it has been. The transition to butyl-based chemistry represents the next major milestone in a well-established cycle of roofing evolution.

For over a century, traditional asphalt-saturated organic felt—commonly known as tar paper—was the unquestioned baseline standard for steep-slope roofing. It served its purpose for an era, but it carried severe physical liabilities: it tore easily under foot traffic, puckered and wrinkled when exposed to morning dew or rain, dried out and cracked after a decade of high attic heat, and added massive weight to the contractor's truck.

In the early 2000s, the industry witnessed a massive, rapid paradigm shift. Woven and non-woven synthetic underlayment entered the market, utilizing advanced polymer chemistry (like polypropylene and polyethylene). Elite installers quickly recognized the undeniable advantages: synthetics didn't tear, they could remain exposed to UV rays for months without degrading, and a single lightweight roll covered the same area as five heavy rolls of old tar paper. Within a single decade, tar paper went from the industry standard to an obsolete commodity.

Today, we are standing at the exact same crossroads. Just as modern polymers permanently replaced organic felt over twenty years ago, advanced butyl chemistry is now replacing outdated, modified-asphalt leak barriers and mechanical perimeters.

Shifting from Commodity to High-Performance Investment

Selling Flash Deck[®] self-adhered products to a client is significantly easier because it shifts the conversation from a "commodity" purchase to a high-performance investment. When a homeowner understands that the underlayment



is the true last line of defense for their home, the value proposition of butyl becomes undeniable. Traditional asphalt ice-and-water guards are built on the same aging chemical principles as old tar paper—they dry out, degrade under intense edge-heat, and lose their hold over time. Flash Deck®, by contrast, offers a superior, thermally stable, "self-healing" gasket seal that far outclasses the aging standards of the past. By positioning this advanced chemistry as the new industry benchmark, you demonstrate to your clients that you aren't just following old, decades-bygone habits. You are leading the way with a modern, high-spec solution explicitly engineered for long-term structural protection.