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Technical Bulletin #4

# NATIONAL SLATE ASSOCIATION

# Technical Bulletin No. 4: Checking Roofing Slate Deliveries

If you have purchased your roofing slate from a reliable supplier and they have employed the services of a capable transportation company, your slate has arrived on site, has been offloaded, and you're ready to start the installation of a 100-plus year natural slate roof.

It is always prudent to review the slate received prior to beginning installation to make sure it meets the requirements of the purchase order placed with the supplier, confirm quantities received, and record any obvious damage to pallets or product during transportation.

Begin by checking to make sure you have received complete documentation of your delivery. At minimum, you should have received the carrier's bill of lading which you will need to sign as proof of receipt, and a detailed packing slip recording the sizes, colors, and pieces in each pallet. You may also have received a copy of your original order and, if requested, a certificate of origin for the materials supplied.

To evaluate your shipment, start by examining each pallet for damage. If broken boards are evident, examine the slate in the general area of the broken boards to determine if any significant quantity of slate has been compromised. If so, try to fairly quantify the extent of the damage and make the supplier aware as soon as is practical so that the damage is on record. Photographs of the pallet and slate damage are very helpful here. Make a note of the damage on the bill of lading and if the truck driver has not left the site, make a note of the damage on their copy of the bill of lading.

As the pallets are being examined, note the pallet number, color, size, and quantity in each, from the label attached to each pallet, and compare this with that pallet number on the detailed packing slip. Evaluate the general thickness of the slate in each pallet to ensure it is within the range of thickness that was ordered. One way of evaluating the general thickness of the slate received is to measure across 100 pieces of slate tightly packed in the pallets and dividing

this measurement by 100. A multiplier is then applied to this number to compensate for the texture of the slate as stated by the supplier. Typical multipliers are .90 for very smooth, .85 for smooth, .80 for normal, and .75 for textured. Note any significant variances by identifying the pallet number, color, size and piece counts and make the supplier aware as soon as is practical.

Once the quantity of each color and size has been confirmed, calculate the number of squares of field slates that have been received. For single size roofs, divide the total number of pieces received by the number of pieces per square. If it is a multi-colored roof, ensure that the percentage of each color received is reasonably close to the percentages of colors ordered. For random width roofs, divide the total number of pieces received in each size by the number of pieces per square for each size and add up the quantity of all sizes to determine the total number of squares received. Again, if it is a multi-colored roof, ensure that the percentage of each color received is reasonably close to the percentage of colors ordered. Note: Contact your slate supplier, or consult page 12 of *Slate Roofs: Design and Installation Manual, 2010* Edition (published by the National Slate Association) for information regarding the number of pieces of slate per square by size.

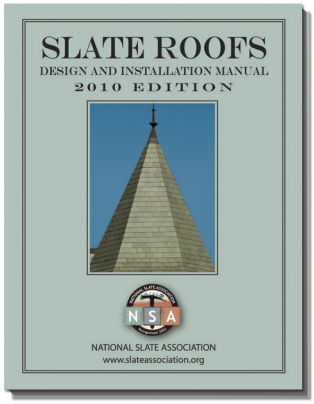
Accessory slates (starter slates, hip & ridge slates, and approach slates) should also be quantified at this time to confirm coverage. These slates should be recorded by pieces, and if multicolored, should be in similar percentages by color as the field slates.

The above process is intended to address the reasonable examination of slate received for a single size or random width roof of either a single color or multiple colors in “one thickness.” The examination of slate received for a graduated slate roof is more complex but still employs the same procedures as stated above for single size or random width roofs. It simply involves the summation of more sizes and thicknesses and confirmation that the color percentages have been maintained for each graduated length and thickness.

As a final safeguard to help make sure the basics of your upcoming installation are technically correct, check your pallets for English and Spanish language versions of National Slate Association Pallet Cards and make sure all slaters to be employed on the roof are aware of their contents. The pallet cards are meant to provide information critical to the successful installation of a natural slate roof and help prevent common installation errors. As an additional resource for more advanced work and specific details, the National Slate Association’s *Slate Roofs: Design and Installation Manual, 2010* Edition should be kept on site during installation and slaters should have access to the National Slate Association’s *Mobile Field Guide* (mobile.slateassociation.org) on their hand-held devices.

With your slate review and calculations completed and an installation plan and technical resources in place, you should be well prepared and organized to proceed with your 100-year slate roof installation and expect it to be everything that you and your client have envisioned.

**For more information on slate roofing, please see *Slate Roofs: Design and Installation Manual,* 2010 Edition, available at www.slateassociation.org**




For more information about The National Slate Association, visit **www.slateassociation.org**

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