Salt air has a way of showing up in every conversation about exterior materials near the water. If your home is in Huntington Bay, Eatons Neck, Lloyd Harbor, or along the shoreline in Centerport and Cold Spring Harbor, your roof lives with moisture, wind, and salt year-round. Two popular choices, cedar shake and architectural asphalt shingles, handle that environment very differently.

What Coastal Conditions Do to a Roof

Roofs near the harbors face a mix of stresses:

- Salt-laden air that speeds corrosion of metal parts
- Persistent dampness that encourages moss and algae
- Wind-driven rain during nor'easters
- Shade from mature trees that keeps surfaces wet longer

A roofing material that thrives inland may struggle here, so the choice deserves more thought than color alone.

Cedar Shake Basics

Cedar shake is split or *roofing contractor Huntington NY* sawn wood, known for its warm look and the silver-gray patina it develops. It suits Cape Cods, shingle-style homes, and many older Colonials on the North Shore.

Strengths

- Classic, natural appearance that fits the area's architecture
- Cedar naturally resists some decay and insects
- Good airflow when installed over spaced sheathing or a ventilated underlayment

Drawbacks

- Needs regular maintenance such as cleaning and treatment
- Moss and algae can take hold in shady, damp spots
- Fire resistance depends on the product and treatment, so ask
- Higher cost than asphalt and fewer experienced installers

Architectural Shingle Basics

Architectural shingles, also called dimensional or laminated shingles, are layered asphalt shingles with a thicker profile and a more textured look than basic three-tab shingles. They are the most common replacement on the island.

Strengths

- Lower cost and widely available
- Many color choices, including blends that mimic wood
- Mostly maintenance free apart from occasional cleaning
- Wide installer availability and straightforward warranties

Drawbacks

- Shorter service life than well-kept cedar in the right setting
- Algae streaking in humid, shaded areas unless the product has algae resistance
- Granule loss over time, especially on sun-baked slopes

Side-by-Side Comparison

Factor Cedar Shake Architectural Shingles Typical lifespan Often 20 to 40 years with care Often 20 to 30 years, varies by product Relative cost Higher Lower Maintenance Regular Light Look Natural, rustic Varied, can imitate wood Handling of salt air Good, with upkeep Good, metal parts matter more Installer pool Smaller Large

These are approximate, typical ranges. Real results vary with ventilation, shade, installation quality, and maintenance.

Where Each Tends to Work Best

Cedar often makes the most sense on shingle-style and Cape homes in the harbor villages, where the architecture calls for it and the owners are willing to maintain it. Architectural shingles tend to suit larger roofs, tighter budgets, and homes under heavy tree cover where maintenance access is limited. Many owners choose algae-resistant architectural shingles in a weathered-wood color for a middle path.

The Parts You Can't See Matter Most

In a coastal setting, the components around the main material often decide how long the roof lasts:

1. **Fasteners:** Stainless steel or hot-dipped galvanized nails resist corrosion better than plain steel.
2. **Flashing:** Ask for corrosion-resistant metals at chimneys, walls, and valleys.
3. **Underlayment:** A quality synthetic or ice and water membrane at eaves and valleys gives a second line of defense.
4. **Ventilation:** Cedar in particular needs air movement to dry out, and a balanced attic helps both materials.

Wind and Storm Exposure

Nor'easters and coastal storms test fastening and edge details. Ask how the shingles or shakes will be fastened, how the starter course and ridge caps are handled, and whether the manufacturer's wind guidance is being followed. Homes on exposed points such as Eatons Neck deserve extra attention here.

Permits and Local Offices

A roof replacement typically requires a permit. In unincorporated hamlets such as Huntington Station, Greenlawn, and Dix Hills, contact the Town of Huntington Building Department. In incorporated villages such as Lloyd Harbor, Huntington Bay, Northport, and Asharoken, the village has its own building department. Because rules can differ, confirm with the right office. Suffolk County also requires home improvement contractors to hold a Suffolk County Consumer Affairs license.

Getting a Straight Answer

Ask any contractor to explain why they recommend one material for your particular house, not just in general. A trusted provider of longislandexteriorco.com Long Island Exterior Co. should look at your tree cover, exposure, and attic ventilation before suggesting cedar or asphalt, and should write fastener and flashing details into the estimate.

Final Thought

Cedar brings beauty and character if you accept the upkeep. Architectural shingles bring practicality and value with less fuss. In coastal Huntington, the best roof is the one matched to your exposure, your budget, and how much time you want to spend caring for it.

About the Author

Daniel K. is a writer with hands-on experience in residential roofing and exterior projects on coastal homes. He enjoys turning contractor jargon into clear advice for homeowners.