



# STANDING SEAM SPOTLIGHT

## An Educational Bulletin for Metal Roofing Professionals

### Beware of the Pricing Shell Game Don't Be Fooled by Slight-of-Hand Component Charges

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*There are several factors that influence the actual cost of a complete metal roofing system. Get the most for your dollar by understanding the real cost.*



Don't be fooled by smoke-and-mirrors panel pricing. If you choose a metal roofing system based solely on the panel cost, you may end up paying more after all of the required system components are added.

One of the main factors considered when deciding which roofing panel to use is the cost per square foot.

We live in a budget-minded and aggressive bidding climate. Contractors have little choice but to use every avenue available to gain an advantage over an ever-growing list of competitors. Maintaining this continual competitive edge sometimes means exploring alternative systems that are completely outside the parameters of the specification.

In recent years, an increasing number of design professionals have bolstered their metal roofing specifications to require systems that comply with all of the most current ASTM, AAMA, and FBC testing procedures. These tests exist to provide assurance and a means by which to specify and select an appropriate roofing system.

Because of the taller seam, a high-performance metal roofing system will typically require a somewhat larger stretch-out (or girth) of coil in order to produce the same amount of installed square footage of roofing area. And while "economically-inspired" metal roofing systems typically require narrower coils to produce enough panels to cover the same square footage, they also undergo inferior testing with inadequate results.

### Case Comparison:

Let's compare true cost on a mid-sized project of 45,000 square feet with a panel system specified as follows:

- 24 gauge with a standard color Kynar 500 finish
- 18-inch maximum panel width
- Mechanically-seamed design
- Panels to be applied over rigid insulation with panel clips and bearing plates
- A 2:12 slope application with 22-gauge metal structural decking

Let's also assume that this project has numerous hips and valleys, with panels running 47-feet from ridge to eave. The specification requires a performance-inspired panel system with a full array of current system testing and a 20-year "No Dollar Limit" weather-tightness warranty.

The architect on this project obviously knows what he wants, and that is a roof that will not leak! The metal roofing contractor wants this project badly, since it is located 10 miles from his shop and the mild winter just chewed up his backlog.

Now, pricing comes in from various manufacturers as follows:

Performance Inspired Panel System	Economy Panel System
\$2.00/sq. foot	\$1.68/sq. foot

On the surface, the “economy” system, a seemingly similar panel, presents an all-too-tempting opportunity to increase profitability, even with a lower bid. This is assuming, of course, that the lower priced system can make it through the approval process with little resistance. After all, the \$.32/square foot savings represents big dollars, so why not take a chance?

## Keep Your Eye on the Bottom Line

Now, watch closely as the shells begin to shuffle and the game begins. As you start looking more closely at the overall pricing picture, the bottom line begins to shift:



### Price per Square Foot

	Performance Inspired Panel System	Economy Panel System
<b>Panel</b>	2-3/8” standing seam \$ 2.00	2-inch standing seam \$ 1.68
<b>+ Clips</b>	The 18-inch-wide performance-inspired system is structurally stronger (according to ASTM E 1592 testing), and requires clips spaced 5’0” on center at a cost of \$.60 per clip. \$ .08	The “economy” panel does not come in an 18-inch width. And even its 16-inch-wide panel is structurally weaker (according to ASTM E 1592 testing), so clips must be spaced 3’0” on center at a cost of \$.85 per clip. \$ .21
	<b>\$ 2.08</b>	<b>\$ 1.89</b>
<b>+ Warranty</b>	20-Year “No Dollar Limit” weather-tightness warranty \$ .15	20-Year “No Dollar Limit” weather-tightness warranty \$ .35
	<b>\$ 2.23</b>	<b>\$ 2.24</b>
<b>+ Shop Drawings</b>	The manufacturer of the performance-inspired system prepares and P.E. stamps shop drawings in-house for a cost of \$3,000 \$ .07	The manufacturer of the “economy” system must farm out this service to two separate entities for a collective cost of \$4,200 \$ .09
<b>Total</b>	<b>Performance Inspired System \$ 2.30</b>	<b>Economy System \$ 2.33</b>

### But That’s Not All

In addition to the system component costs illustrated above, the labor for each system can have a dramatic effect on the total installed cost. This 45,000 square foot project consists of roughly 30,000 lineal feet of 18-wide panels or 34,000 lineal feet of 16-wide panels.

The “economy” system can only be seamed in a single direction at a speed of 15 lineal feet per minute, requiring three men to perform this function. Remember, the third man may be required to walk the seaming tool up the 47-foot slope in order to repeat the process for every single panel.

The performance-inspired system can be seamed in two directions at a speed of 60 lineal feet per minute, requiring only two men to send the seaming tool back and forth from ridge to eave. The seaming process for the “performance-inspired” system takes fewer men and less than a quarter of the time to seam the same roofing area.

## Winning the Game

So, how can design professionals ensure that their customer gets the most for their dollar? And how can roofing installers offer what is specified, still be the low bidder, and maintain profitability?



Don’t look at price per square foot alone. Understand that the true cost of the total roofing system benefits both the designer and the contractor alike.