

Estimate

Review your roof estimate

Calling contractors and asking for estimates is the easy part, now you need to compare the estimates you received. Always ask for a detailed estimate in writing. It is impossible to make an informed decision if you are not given all of the information. Before you begin your review of the written estimates, call the customer references provided by each contractor and have your notes from the ensuing conversation handy as you review each estimate.

Although the bottom line is important, never compare estimates only by the overall cost. As you review your estimate, here are some of the questions you should be asking yourself:

Materials: Price versus Quality

Look carefully at the type of material quoted and its price. If the estimate does not contain a detailed breakdown of materials and labour, call the contractor and ask for this information. To bring in the lowest bid, your contractor may have priced your project using a lower quality roofing product which could impact the lifespan of your roof. It is always necessary to weigh the benefits of quality versus price when you are reading estimates. It may be worthwhile in the long run to pay extra now and save hassle a few years down the road.

Also pay close attention to the type of insulation and sealants that are budgeted for your project. Although the cost differential is not high between a thinner insulation product and one with more layers, the quality of the product will directly affect your costs after the roof is installed. If you use a thicker insulation, the amount of heat or cold that seeps into your home will be significantly lessened, thus lowering the amount you will be paying for air conditioning or heat.

Although it is not recommended that you climb up on your roof to measure and determine the amount of material needed, look closely at the estimate from your contractor to make sure he is bidding the correct amount of material. If the contractor has never measured your roof, but offers a decisive amount of materials to be used, ask him to justify his number. Be sure that you are paying for the amount of material you need, and not material that will never be used, or not enough material to complete the job thus running up significant unexpected costs.

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