

## What to Ask a Roofing Contractor

### *Questions to ask your roofing contractor*

Regardless whether you choose a service company like Roofing by Bloggs, the contractor that did Aunt Jane's roof or blindly call from the phone book you will need to determine which contractor you want to trust your home to. Here is a list of questions you might ask during the interview with each contractor to help you decide who to ask for a written estimate:

1 What is the full name and address of the roofing company?

Try to hire a roofing contractor that has an office nearby. The likelihood of quicker service is greater if the roofing company is based near your home.

Can you provide a list of former customers as references?

Contacting others who have worked with the contractor in the past is a good way to determine his reliability and to get an idea of what the roofing experience would be like with this contractor taking care of the job. However, realize that the roofer can legitimately refuse to give a long list--many customers may not want their names released. Here is a list of questions to ask a contractor's customer reference.

What is your track record with customer complaints?

Try to find out how your contractor handles problems when they do arise. Request a referral from a job that involved a complaint.

Is payment upon completion? Is there a deposit before the project begins, how much is the deposit?

Will you furnish me with a written contract including explicit payment instructions and total price?

Do you have bonding capabilities?

Always look for a bonded contractor, assurance that he can perform the work and complete the project, giving you piece of mind that if a problem were to arise you would be protected. What is a bonded contractor?

Will you furnish me with a guarantee and manufacturers warranty?

How long has your roofing company been in business?

Needless to say, longer is usually better than shorter. Less than three years may signal an unstable business. On the other hand, everybody has to start sometime. References will be helpful to double-check any business, and are especially important when dealing with a new business. A newer business may have a great future, but it is only reasonable to be more careful when considering its referrals.

Are you going to obtain the required re-roofing permits?

Be leery of the roofer who asks you to obtain these permits!

In the event that your equipment damages my property, who is liable?

It is a good idea to have your contractor provide both Certificates of Insurance for both liability and Worker's Compensation before work begins on your home.

Will there be sub-contractors? If so, what are their names and license numbers?

If your contractor does hire out a subcontractor, it is a good idea to go over all of the same questions with them. Of particular interest is insurance; be sure that the subcontractor holds all of the proper insurance so that you are not held liable for any accident that may occur on the job.

Will you submit a maintenance program for the new roof system?

Sadly, most roofing contractors will not offer a maintenance program for your roof once it is installed. Regular inspection of the new roof will allow for potential problems to be caught early and remedied before they cause substantial damage.

Is there any pending legal action against your company?

Some major litigation could put a company out of business. If a lawsuit is pending, find out what the suit entails. This may include going to the local courthouse and looking at the court documents filed for the case to date.

As with any construction project, be sure you request and receive a written proposal. Examine it carefully to make sure you it is both complete and fair. There are a few things you must be sure to avoid:

Do not pay in full unless the work has been completed. Do not pay in full without a final inspection.

Do not pay in full until material and workers lien releases have both been received. Never settle for an oral agreement with your contractor for any of the work needed. All points should be clearly documented in writing.

If questions come up after the contracts have been signed, talk to the contractor who signed the contract, as he will be the one with the authority to make any final decision.