

What You Should Know Before You Hire a Roofing Contractor



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Introduction

Are you in the market for a roof repair or replacement? Or, are you having a hard time deciding what you need? There are many factors to consider with it comes to roofing, and it can be difficult sorting through all of the information in order to make the decisions that best suit your needs. If this sounds like you, then this report is a great place to start. We are going to introduce 5 important things to know before you hire a roofing contractor. We hope you enjoy this report, and hope it helps you decide what is best for you.

How to Care for Your Roof

You put a lot of money into your roof, and you want to get the most life out of it, right? The best way to do that is to put some time and effort into maintaining your roof. Fortunately for you, caring for your roof won't cost you an arm and a leg. As a matter of fact, it's not even something that you have to think about all of the time. Taking some specific measures here and there is enough to keep your roof in tip top shape, as long as you are dedicated to paying close attention to the signs that your roof may need some TLC. Need some maintenance pointers? Here are some tips for how to care for your roof:

- **Clear away debris.** If you have overhanging trees, then you are likely to have this problem. Dead leaves, twigs, and acorns that pile up on your roof are much more than just an eyesore; they present the perfect opportunity for water to puddle up, which could lead to leaks.
- **Wash regularly.** You need to wash your roof every one to three years to keep it looking good and functioning at its best. Purchase a roof cleaner and use a sprayer to apply it to your entire roof. Be thorough. After letting the cleaner sit for as long as the manufacturer suggests, rinse it off, paying careful attention to stains and mildew spots.
- **Clean gutters.** To ensure that water drains from your roof as efficiently as possible, you need to keep the gutters free of debris. Use a blower to remove foliage, and then a water hose to wash the rest of any buildup away.

Signs it is Time to Replace Your Roof

If you have made it a point to take proper care of your roof and have maintained it as necessary, then you should get the longest life possible out of your roof. However, as the old saying goes, nothing lasts forever, and there will inevitably come a time when you will have to replace your roof. How do you know when your roof's time is up? Here are some signs that it is time to replace your roof:

- **Dipping and/or buckling.** When your roof noticeably dips and/or buckles in areas, it is indicative of a major underlying problem – namely wood rot or swelling from moisture. Either way, the foundation of your roof is no longer suitable to hold roofing materials, and you will need a replacement.
- **Leaks.** Look for either an unexplained puddle on your floor, or even brown spots on your ceiling. Some leaks are more obvious than others, but they are always a sign that your roof needs to be either repaired or replaced.
- **Damaged shingles.** Examine the shingles from the outside of your home. If they are curling up, losing gravel, or are loose and hanging out of place, then it may be that you need to call a roofing contractor; those are both signs that your shingles have reached the end.
- **Decreasing home value.** It may be that you need to replace your roof for aesthetic reasons. If your property value is lowered because your

roof is damaged, dirty, or out of date, then you may want to consider replacing it to maintain your property's market value.

Roofing Materials

Once you have determined that it is time to replace your roof, you will need to select the type of roofing material to be used for your new roof. There are many different roofing materials to choose from, and each carries its own pros, cons, and price points. Need some help sorting through all of your options? Here is a guide to roofing materials:

- **Shingles.** This is the least expensive roofing material to install, and also to maintain. Shingles may be made of asphalt, plastic polymer, or wood, and come in a wide variety of colors and looks. Shingles are suitable for any type or style of home.
- **Metal.** Metal sheeting comes in steel, aluminum, zinc alloy, and copper. You may prefer its natural finish, or choose a sleek painted version. Although a bit pricier than shingles, metal is still relatively inexpensive to install, and maintenance is super easy.
- **Slate.** This is the most expensive roofing material you can choose, but when properly installed and cared for, a slate roof can last over a hundred years! Slate is very heavy, must be installed by a contractor who specializes in slate, and is only suitable for high-pitched roofs.
- **Tile.** Made of clay (or sometimes concrete), roofing tiles are heavy and brittle, but they are generally long lasting. Tile is one of the higher end choices you can go with, and is best suited for Spanish or Mediterranean style housing, although some tiles are made to look like wood or slate.

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- **Wood.** Wood shakes or shingles are made from wood that is treated with a rot resistant chemical. They are mid-line in terms of price, but they do not last as long as other alternatives, and require a good deal of upkeep. However, they lend the home a very natural look and feel that is distinctive to them.

How Much Will Your New Roof Cost You?

It goes without saying that a new roof can cost you a pretty penny. However, there are many things that can contribute to this cost, and you therefore have some wiggle room when it comes to pricing the best new roof for you. The important thing is that you learn as much as you can about the available options, and that you take inventory of what is most important to you, so that you have an idea of what you will be spending in the end. How much will your new roof cost you? Here are some factors to take into consideration:

- **Roofing material.** You are now aware of the different types of roofing materials available to you, as well as their different price points. However, do you know that the type of roofing material you choose is the single most important determinant of the cost of your new roof? For example, you may purchase inexpensive asphalt shingles for a mere \$75 a square foot . . . or you may fork out over \$2000 per square foot on a slate roof. Weigh out your options carefully.
- **Additional materials.** Besides the roofing material, itself, there are a number of other materials that must be used for any roofing job. These include things like fasteners, flashing, underlayment, and starter strip, among other things. The type and grade of these materials that your contractor chooses to use can have a significant impact on the cost of your roof, so be sure to address this when obtaining bids.

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- **Complexity of the job.** The simpler the job, the less material you will need, and the less labor will cost you. Things that increase a job's complexity (and cost) include extra angles, planes and cuts, a steeply pitched roof line, tearing away an old roof to make room for the new one, and installing extra/new ventilation, gutters, etc.
 - **Labor.** You may be surprised to find that labor costs for the same project may vary greatly from one contractor to the next. Therefore, it pays to shop around. Generally speaking (and depending on the complexity of the job), you can expect to pay anywhere between \$40 and \$80 per square foot for labor.

How to Choose the Best Roofing Company

You are going to invest a lot of money into your new roof. On top of that, it will sit atop your home for years – or, hopefully decades – to come. For these reasons, you can't just hire anyone to install your new roof. You need a reliable professional – one you can trust to see your vision of your new roof to fruition, and in a way that will stand the test of time. There will no doubt be numerous contractors vying for the position, claiming that they are the best for the job. How do you sort through all of your options and pick the right one for you? Here are some pointers for how to choose the best roofing contractor for your project:

- **Referrals.** The best way for you to find potential roofing contractors is to ask around. If people you know and trust vouch for a particular roofing contractor, then chances are you've found a contractor you can trust. Additionally, search the web for reviews of contractors in your area, and call up local builders to ask who they use.
- **Licensing, bonding, and registration.** Local ordinances will determine what type of registration a roofing contractor should have. Additionally, you will have to find out from your local contractor's association just what type of licensing and bonding contractors need to work in your area.

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- **Insurance.** Don't be afraid to ask for proof of insurance. Your contractor of choice should have both workman's comp and liability coverage, and should be able to produce current certificates to prove it.
 - **Experience.** Look for a contractor that has verifiable experience completing projects similar to yours. To ascertain just what type of experience potential contractors have, ask for a list of completed projects, and then do your homework to validate their claims.
 - **Financial stability.** Your contractor of choice should be financially stable enough to see your project to completion without a hitch or holdup. Any reputable contractor will be able to show you the company's current financial records.
 - **Manufacturer connections.** Most manufacturers, especially of specialty roofing materials, require that contractors establish an account with them in order to be able to install their products. If you have a particular product in mind, then your contractor should have a relationship with the manufacturer to be able to install it.
 - **Customer service.** It doesn't matter how good a contractor is, if you can't get through when you need to. Before you commit to anything, put in several calls to make sure they are handled with knowledge and consideration, and that your inquiries are responded to in a timely manner.

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- **References.** Once you have narrowed your list of potential contractors down to a manageable size, you need to ask for references. Call each reference and find out, from the horse's mouth, just how good each contractor is in regards to work quality, timeliness, and customer service.

Conclusion

There is a lot to think about when it comes to repairing or replacing your roof. Experienced professionals can help you make all of the important decisions, and can also bring your vision to life. To put your roofing project into the hands of contractors you can trust, contact America's Best Roofing. We can be reached by phone, at 503-259-0538, or by email: shonda@americasbestcontractors.com