

Questions to Ask a Roofing Contractor:

Most roofing disputes begin with an unrealistically low bid, a poor quality contract, incomplete specifications, or all of the above. Good roofing specifications should include the following information:

Standards of Work - All work must be done: to code, manufacturers specifications and at least to "standard practices of the trades".

Licensing and Qualifications - All work must be done by a licensed contractor, and by a qualified and supervised staff.

Care and Safety - The contractor must be responsible for the protection of the house, contents, inhabitants and property during the work. The contractor is furthermore responsible for the regular cleaning and removal of all construction debris - yes, this should include cleaning the gutters.

Schedule - When will the work start? when will it be completed?

A New Roof or Re-coating - Will the old roofing be removed? or will the new roofing be installed on top of the previous layer of roofing?

Roof Deck Modifications - If the old roofing is removed, what modification will be made to the "roof deck"? (remain as is? new plywood? new OSB?..)

Hidden Damage - If damage is discovered under the old roofing, what "time and material" formula will be used for any repairs? Note: a good roofer should be able to tell in advance if damage is likely to exist under the old roofing.

Associated Systems - Do the chimneys need repair? how about the flashing? Is the venting to code and to manufacturers specifications? do the old skylights need replacement? does the house need new gutters? does the electrical strike need repair? is this work included in the bid? (chimney repair should usually be done prior to the new roofing installation, new gutters installed after the roofing.)

A reputable company will do it's best to identify such item "up front", and reduce the need for costly change orders.

Special Requirements - Are there some conditions which require special methods? for example: short fasteners at open soffits? stainless fasteners at an ocean side house? foam board insulation in a "hot roof"?

Material Selection - What kind of roofing material will be used? Color? what kind of felt? will the material be nailed or stapled? what style of roofing vents? does your roof need moss control "zinc strips"?

Warrantees - What is the length of the roofing material warrantee? (20 yr. min. on sloped roofs, 10 yr. min. on flat roofs) labor warrantee? (5 yr. min.).

Price and Payment Schedule - What is the total price of the job? does this include sales tax? When are the payments due? (Some smaller roofing companies may require a small deposit at the start of work. Most of the contracted amount should only be due after all of the work is completed in a satisfactory manor).

Remember: a roof is much more than the installed roofing material. It is an entire "system" of components. And, as is so often the case: "the devil is in the details".

Please note: the above list of specifications is not a legal contract review. It is only a listing of some of the more common and important specifications which should be one part of a complete roofing contract.