

# 10 Big Questions to Ask Your Roofing Contractor



Finding the right roofing contractor is not an easy task. There are so many to choose from, so you need to know exactly what questions to ask when speaking with a roofing specialist. You want to make sure your money is being spent wisely and that you know what to expect from your contractor every step of the way. Asking questions before hiring a roofing contractor is the best way to avoid unpleasant surprises later.

Here are 10 BIG questions that are essential to ask potential roofing contractors. Their responses will be the determining factors in deciding which roofing contractor is best for the important job of safely and efficiently replacing your roof.

## 1. Are you a licensed roofing contractor?

Understanding code requirements will help you determine the licensing requirements for roofers in your state. Every roofer should be licensed in the state where they are based and must comply with code requirements for that state. Fall protection is a mandatory requirement. Roof brackets, scaffolding, handrails and harnesses are examples of fall protection devices. Movable platforms can be used as well. Ask about the roofer's years of experience. Check to see if their license is current and if they have a portfolio of their previous work.

## 2. Do you have liability and workman's compensation insurance?

Workman's compensation insurance covers roofing company employees while they are on your property. Roofing companies are now required by law to carry workman's comp insurance, although it is still a good idea to ask anyway just to confirm. Liability insurance protects your property in case of any damage during the roofing process. The roofer should have a certificate that verifies they have liability insurance, so you are not left responsible for any damage caused by the roofer.

### 3. Are you a local roofing contractor?

The reason this is important is to be able to quickly solve any future problems with your roof after the contractors have completed their work. It is best to hire a local contractor who will be there when you need them. Ask for your roofer's legal business name and current contact information. Many roofers travel to other states for work, so plan ahead and choose a local contractor you can depend on for unexpected repairs or replacement. Most local contractors care about the work they do in their communities and they want to build a positive reputation.

**For example**, Southers Construction is a local roofing contractor that offers a Lifetime Workmanship Warranty. This means that any repairs made to the roof are under this warranty. If an issue is repaired by Southers Construction, and the same exact issue happens again, Southers Construction will be able to travel to your home or business and make the repair free of charge.

### 4. Do I need new shingles or should I replace the roof?

This depends on how old the existing shingles are and the state of their current condition. There should be two layers of shingles and they should lie flat on the roof. If the shingles are damaged and are breaking away from the roof, they should be replaced right away because that could lead to leaks. The leaks can eventually affect the wooden supports underneath the shingles and seriously damage your roof. In that case, you would need to hire a roofing contractor to replace the roof. It is important to check the shingles and roof periodically, especially in the Spring. Waiting to replace the shingles can result in greater expense later when you discover that you need a new roof.

### 5. How long will it take to replace the roof?

The time it will take to replace your roof is difficult to estimate, because it depends on many unpredictable factors. There could be inclement weather, delays in the shipping of materials and other obstacles that affect the work schedule. Good roofers are busy, so that can be a factor as well. The roofing team works as quickly as possible, but delays can occur. It is best to be patient and communicate with your contractor, so you always know where they are in the process.

## 6. Will my new roof have a warranty?

Every new roof should have a warranty that lasts for at least twenty-five years. This is the minimum amount of time that new shingles are expected to last. The roof decking should also remain intact with no rotting or warping. The warranty should cover the total cost of all materials and repairs during the warranty period. Never select a roofing contractor without a warranty that protects you from unexpected expense due to faulty materials or craftsmanship.

## 7. What is your roofing price per square foot?

Asking what the roofing price is per square foot helps to eliminate unethical roofers who just want to quote a total cost and get the job. Pricing a new roof involves many different factors, so a reputable roofing contractor will ask questions like the age and pitch of the roof as well as the number of existing shingle layers. They should also ask about the current condition of the shingles and wood decking. Finally, a question about any known issues that they need to be aware of will give them a better idea of what the overall cost will be. If a contractor bases the price on only one factor or ignores your questions and just quotes the overall projected cost, be wary about hiring them.

## 8. Will I be provided with an estimate of the roofing cost?

The answer to this question has to be “yes” in order to consider hiring the roofer. Having an estimate gives you an idea of what to budget, so you can plan accordingly. Don't accept an estimate that is delivered to your mailbox. You need to have a chance to ask questions and talk through the details of the estimate with the roofing contractor. You will also need to discuss the materials that are to be used for the new roof, so that expensive materials are not used if there are cheaper options available for the same product. If a roofer leaves the estimate in your mailbox anyway, it might be an indication to look for another roofing contractor.

## 9. Who will be on site during the roofing installation to make sure everything goes as planned?

You have a right to know who will be at your home to oversee the installation of your new roof. If there is no project manager, then the manager or owner of the company should be there to supervise. Even if the roofers are experienced, there needs to be an industry expert in charge. You need to know who will be there to answer questions or help if there are mishaps. Ask how many roofers will be on site so that you know who is on your property at all times. If somebody new shows up, make sure they are authorized to be there. Safety and security should always be primary concerns, so you should be an active participant in the roofing installation process.

## 10. How will you protect my property during the installation of my new roof?

A contractor has a responsibility to protect your property and everyone working on the installation of your new roof. That means all required safety measures should be implemented so you are confident that the contractor's equipment will not damage your property. Your gutters should be stabilized and drip-edge metal installed to guide run-off, so it doesn't get under shingles resulting in damage. A container for refuse material should be provided and everything should be cleared away after the job is completed. The safety of everyone involved and the security of your property should be primary objectives of your roofing contractor.



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