

Chappell Roofing, Inc.

15 Questions to Ask a Roofer Before Hiring

Chappell Roofing, Inc. has put together this list of 15 questions that every homeowner should ask a potential roofer before signing a contract, so you can ensure the company you hire is reputable and capable of getting the roof done right the first time around.

1. Question You Should Ask: Are you licensed?

Answer You Want to Hear: Yes

Why You Want to Hear It: Many states require a roofer be licensed in the state; however, all states are different. This means one code may be required in Fairbury while another may be required in Marysville. So what's a homeowner to do? Research the code requirements in your area. If contractors, including roofers, are required to be licensed in your state, only work with those who are so you have some recourse in case things go wrong. Be sure the license is up to date.

2. Question You Should Ask: Do you have workman's comp insurance?

Answer You Want to Hear: Yes

Why You Want to Hear It: At one time employers with three or fewer employees didn't have to offer workman's compensation insurance; now they do by law. Still, some contractors and roofers will skimp out on this requirement. The reason? Insurance isn't cheap, and some would rather take their chances. The problem, of course, is when the chance is taken on your property and an employee becomes injured. If you hire a company that doesn't offer employees workman's compensation and someone gets injured on your property, you might find yourself forking over thousands of dollars to pay for medical bills. This is a loss no homeowner wants to incur. To protect yourself, make sure the company you hire insures each worker that will be present on your property.

3. Question You Should Ask: Do you carry general liability insurance?

Answer You Want to Hear: Yes

Why You Want to Hear It: Workman's compensation covers the employees on your property; general liability insurance covers your actual property. For example, if a contractor accidentally burns your house down in the process of welding something on your roof (it has happened!) and the company doesn't carry liability insurance, you could be responsible for covering the debts incurred by this tragic accident. When it comes to insurance, though, don't simply take the roofer's word for it. Ask to see an insurance certificate. This certificate will list your name and address as an additional insured, so if something happens on the job, you –and all of your hard-earned property - are covered. If you still feel hesitant, call the insurance company and ask.

4. Question You Should Ask: Will you remove my old roof?

Answer You Want to Hear: Yes

Why You Want to Hear it: Some roofers will claim to save time and money by inspecting, with their eyes, the old roof, and then, if all looks well, shingling over it. However, unless the old shingles are pulled up you will never know if you have soft spots or rotten wood beneath the

current shingles. If bad spots remain behind, you will have larger, costlier problems in the future. Don't let a roofer place a new roof on your house until they have taken up the old roof.

5. Question You Should Ask: Are you going to install drip edge or edge metal when you install the new roof?

Answer You Want to Hear: Yes

Why You Want to Hear It: Drip edge or edge metal is a small piece of aluminum placed under the shingle where it comes off of the roof. This piece of metal extends past the roof and allows runoff to flow into, rather than behind, the gutters, protecting the fascia and wood on your roof. If a drip edge or edge metal is not installed, you will incur problems associated with water damage. However, unless you specifically ask about drip edge prior to the job, some roofers will skip over this part of the process. For this reason, it is essential you ask about drip edge prior to hiring a roofing company.

6. Question You Should Ask: Will you use ladder stabilizers or standoffs to protect my gutters when you install my roof?

Answer You Want to Hear: Yes

Why You Want to Hear It: You may not think about it as you contemplate your new roof, but the method the company uses to get onto the roof is almost as important as the type of roof you choose. Ladder stabilizers and/or standoffs should be used in every roofing job. Stabilizers are like big arms that rest on the roof or on the side of the roof. This keeps the weight of the extension ladder, which can weigh a few hundred pounds, off of your gutters. Without some type of standoff or stabilizer, you might end up with a great roof but a torn up, broken apart guttering system around your house at the end of the job. If the company you're considering for the roofing job answers no to this question, you need to ask what they will do to ensure your gutter system will remain intact and unharmed during the project; if they can't answer this question, don't trust them to complete your roof.

7. Question You Should Ask: Do you bring a container for refuse material?

Answer You Want to Hear: Yes

Why You Want to Hear It: Refuse from the old roof, such as shingles, will need to be placed somewhere as it comes down. The company you hire should bring a container to the job site to contain the refuse. You should not be required to supply this container, nor should you have to deal with the refuse once the job is completed.

8. Question You Should Ask: Where will you place the container for the refuse?

Answer You Want to Hear: Depends upon your property situation, but...

Why You Want to Hear It: Asphalt driveways can crack under extreme pressure. If the company places the container on your driveway, you may wind up with a lot more to fix when the job is over. For this reason, it's important to ask where the container will be placed, and then question the answer. If in the driveway, what are the provisions in case the driveway cracks? If not in the driveway, then where will the container be placed?

9. Question You Should Ask: What will you do in the case of inclement weather during the job?

Question You Want to Hear: Cover the job project in tarpaulins or plastic covers

Why You Want to Hear It: Let's face it: the weather guy is not always right. This isn't too bad when you're stuck in the office all day, but when someone is removing and replacing your roof it can be a major problem. If the prettiest of days turns into a rain storm, what will the roofing company do to protect the interior of your home? Make sure your roofer has a plan for this. Your roof should be covered in some type of plastic sheeting or tarpaulin to ensure it, and everything beneath it, remains dry. Also ask what the plan is if the rainy days extend for a while. Will the company come back to ensure the covering is keeping the home dry? If there is a storm with high winds, will someone be available to come out and secure the covering if it appears to not be holding?

10. Question You Want to Ask: Do you have a local phone number and address?

Answer you want to Hear: Yes

Why You Want to Hear It: After large storms that bring hail, strong winds, and tornadoes it's likely you'll see a band of trucks roaming the streets, filled with contractors looking for work. While some of these may be on the up and up, what happens when the job gets done and then something goes wrong? Who do you call to fix what was not installed correctly or got damaged before the warranty expired? Will the person that did the work be available to come back out to fix what is wrong? If you choose to deal with a company not local to your area, you may not be able to get the company back to fix any potential problems in the future.

11. Question You Should Ask: What is the warranty on my new roof?

Answer You Want to Hear: Minimum of 25 years and a *Chappell Roofing, Inc. Lifetime Workmanship Guarantee*

Why You Want to Hear It: Today's dimensional style shingles cost the same price as the older style shingles and also last longer. Homeowners should get at least a 25 year warranty with both product types though.

12. Question You Should Ask: What is the cost of plywood should you find rotten roof or soft roof decking?

Answer You Want to Hear: A dollar amount per plywood sheet

Why You Want to Hear It: Unscrupulous roofers might skip over this information as you head into an agreement. Once the roof is up, it's tough for you to dispute an over inflated cost for plywood sheeting to fix what was rotten underneath. For this reason, you need to ask how much it will cost per plywood sheeting should the roofer find rotten or soft pieces that need to be replaced. This will leave you with no surprises during the job, and it will allow you to compare one roofer's estimate to another's.

13. Question You Should Ask: How will you protect my landscaping during this project?

Answer You Want to Hear: Specific details on what the company will do to ensure your landscaping does not take a beating. (Placement of equipment, traffic patterns to avoid trampling the bushes, etc)

Why You Want to Hear It: Too often, homeowners think about what's going on top of the roof and forget about what surrounds the house. This includes the gutters, which we talked about earlier, but also the landscaping. If you spend hundreds - or thousands - of dollars planting

trees, shrubs and flowers, you don't want to come home to a new roof but a torn up lawn. Before you hire a company, ask specifically what they will do to protect your landscaping. Where will the ladders go? Where will the old shingles and potentially rotten plywood be dropped or tossed so that it doesn't affect the bushes and flowers that surround your house? If an accident does occur and an employee from the company tromps through your rose garden, what will the company do to fix the damage?

14. Question You Should Ask: Is there going to be someone on site with whom I can communicate?

Answer You Want to Hear: Yes

Why You Want to Hear It: While we always hope home renovation projects run smoothly, experience – and shows like *Holmes on Holmes* - prove they don't. If you return home after a long day at work to find your roof is as open as a convertible and the company is ready to leave for the night, you want to know there is a project manager on site with whom you can communicate your concerns. While some companies will tell you during the sale that you'll have someone on site managing the job, you might find when the crew shows up in the morning no one is sure who that project manager is. Find out before you leave for the day. If you still don't know, call the company and ask. And if no one can answer, send the crew away until they can. A reputable roofing company will have someone on site throughout the project to answer questions and address concerns.

15. Question You Should Ask: Do you provide a written estimate?

Answer You Want to Hear: Yes, a free written estimate is provided by Chappell Roofing, Inc.

Why You Want to Hear It: Settling into a contract without a detailed estimate can cause problems in the long run. Be sure, before signing a contract, you have a detailed estimate for the job. Include the cost of removing the old roof, adding the new roof, and anything that could come up in the process, such as rotten plywood that needs to be replaced.

Chappell Roofing, Inc. is proud to be able to answer "YES" to all 15 of these questions. We hope to work with you on your roofing projects now and in the future.

Please contact us for all of your roofing needs.

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