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One of the best ways to choose a roofing contractor is to speak with them over the phone or meet with them and ask them some questions. To locate a roofing contractor to contact you can ask friends and family for referrals or do a Google search as there are many great roofing directory sites that will provide a short list of roofers in your area. Its also worthwhile to check out the contractor's own website as well.

Doing a little digging might seem time-consuming but what is even more time-consuming not to mention costly is to fix a botched roof job. So how should you select a roofing contractor? Tips for selecting a roofing contractor fall into three categories: the contractor's qualifications, the contractor's work, and the contractor's past. Read the tips below.

Qualifications

First, do not hire a roofing contractor who is not licensed. However, just because a contractor is licensed does not necessarily mean the contractor is a committed professional who will do excellent work. You can tell more about a contractor's commitment by seeing if the contractor is a member of a trade association and if the contractor has taken any continuing education training. If the contractor says yes, call the trade association and ask to see certificates of the continuing education.

Make sure they have a permanent business. When selecting a contractor, you need to be confident that the contractor will be able to complete the work they promised to do. One of the best ways to have this confidence is to select a contractor who can financially commit to finishing your project. The contractor should have a permanent phone number and address. Visit their business to see if they have the equipment and employees to complete your project successfully.

Ask if they have insurance coverage and how much. Just because they have insurance, it might not be very much coverage. Have the contractor show you a certificate of insurance.

Contractors can get a certificate of their insurance that shows coverage dates and policy limits from their insurance carrier. Also ask if they have workers' compensation coverage. Because property owners can be sued for accidents that occur on their property, it is very important that all contractors have workers' compensation insurance.

The Contractor's Workmanship

All contractors also need to have a safety plan so ask your potential contractor to provide you with one. Safety plans are important for making sure projects get completed and are required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).



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Find out how long the contractor's warranty on work performed is. A typical time period is one year or longer. The length of the warranty doesn't matter so much as whether the contractor plans to stand behind the warranty. Good contractors often will work beyond a written contract. Keep in mind that the manufacturer provides product warranties and often warranties are only valid if a contractor is "certified" to install the product. Be sure to talk to your contractor about following manufacturer specifications that are necessary for product warranty.

The contractor should thoroughly discuss your home improvement project with you. Areas to talk about with your contractor include the color and type of products you want to use, how to get a permit if necessary, what the daily clean-up procedure is, and how the work will be paid for.

Past Performance and Customer Service

Find out how long the contractor has been in business. Though a contractor in business for a year or two might do excellent work, it would be better to select a contractor who has been in business for at least five years. Often the longer a contractor has been in business, the more experience they have, which often means more choices and better workmanship for your roof. Ask to see pictures of the contractor's work and for references from past customers. Get this information on the contractor's website or by calling previous customers and asking what they thought.

Many of the best contractors have had to handle complaints. Complaints are not necessarily bad, but the way a contractor has handled them can be. Ask the contractor how they have dealt with complaints in the past or call the Better Business Bureau to find out.

In addition to the above advice, another worthwhile tip for selecting a roofing contractor is to have three contractors you are considering submit three bids in writing. Having three bids in writing is useful to compare prices and products the contractors will use to complete the project. If one bid is significantly higher or lower than the others, this could be a red flag. Again, roofing directory sites can help streamline the process here, by putting you in contact with three roofing companies by filling out just one estimate request form.

Remember, what it all comes down to is what your instinct is telling you about the contractor. Even if the contractor manages to meet the above tips but something is telling you not to hire the contractor, don't. With a home improvement job as important as repairing or replacing a roof, you need to hire a roofing contractor whom you feel very good about the work getting done.

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