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By [BBB Serving Central California & Inland Empire Counties](#), October 12, 2018.



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Having to replace or repair your roof can be an overwhelming prospect. It's one of the biggest projects you may have to consider for your home and can be expensive and time consuming.

Better Business Bureau (BBB) has tips to keep in mind whenever you are hiring any contractor to work in your home. You can find advice on everything from researching vendors to getting estimates to signing a contract [here](#).

What do you need to keep in mind additionally for roofers?

- **Make sure you understand the full scope of the project.** What exactly is the roofer going to do? Will they be doing spot repairs or replacing the whole roof? Will they be removing the old roof or covering it with the new roof? Make sure you understand the pros and cons of the solutions and that everything is detailed in your contract.
- **Ask about clean-up and waste removal.** Confirm that your contractor will be responsible for taking

away all old materials and cleaning up your site after their work is complete.

- **Consider your gutters and landscaping.** A roof job will require the use of ladders that can cause damage when leaned against your gutters or stuck in your landscaping. How will your roofer protect against damage or fix things after the job is done?
- **Plan for bad weather.** What happens if there is bad weather while your roof project is underway? Ask your roofer about what they will do to protect your home in the case of rain or snow.
- **Check your insurance coverage.** If your project is for fixing damage, check your homeowner's insurance to see if your project is covered and how you should proceed if it is. (You also want to check your contractor's insurance coverage for things like worker's compensation, property damage, and personal liability.)
- **Different contractors for different roofing systems.** Roofing contractors may be certified to install specific types of roofs. You can check with the manufacturer to see if your contractor is certified for their system.

Clearly written proposals that are detailed and broken down into separate line items are a good sign that the contractor is being thorough and has prepared an accurate estimate. The following is a partial list of items your estimate or proposal should include:

- The type of roof covering, manufacturer and color
- Materials to be included in the work, e.g., underlayment, ice dam protection membrane
- Scope of work to be done:
- Removal or replacement of existing roof
- Flashing work, e.g., existing flashings to be replaced or re-used, adding new flashing, flashing metal type
- Ventilation work, e.g., adding new vents
- Who is responsible for repairing/replacing exterior landscape or interior finishes that are damaged during the course of the work? Make sure that it contains language addressing who is responsible for any damage that occurs as a result of the work.
- All items of concern and work to be done should be included in the contract.
- Installation method
- Approximate starting and completion dates
- Payment procedures
- Length of warranty and what is covered, e.g., workmanship, water leakage
- Who will haul away the old roofing materials and/or project waste (e.g. extra materials, packaging, etc.)? Is there extra charge for this service?

There are also ways you can extend the life of your roof:

- **Clear dead or overhanging branches.** Have a professional tree service evaluate the branches hanging over your roof and decide whether or not they are a risk. If the branches are dead, that increases the chance of them falling onto your roof. In addition, heavily shaded areas of your roof can retain moisture, which sometimes leads to mold. Regular trimmings of overhanging branches will help your roof dry in a uniform manner.
- **Inspect for hail damage.** After strong storms, especially hailstorms, have a licensed insurance

adjuster or contractor inspect your roof. Dimples and cracks on the shingles are key indicators that hail damage has occurred.

- **Keep your eyes and ears open and remove debris.** Homeowners should inspect their roof regularly and monitor for hail damage. Ground-level inspections can be done by the homeowner. You should also keep your gutters clear. If there's debris that needs to be removed, either call a professional or be very cautious when getting up on your roof.

Common roofing scams often occur after a storm when a roofer "just happens" to be on your street and notices damage to your roof. Learn more about these so-called "Storm Chasers" [here](#). Another approach is to knock on your door and tell you they have extra shingles or roofing from another job and can offer you a good deal. Learn more about home improvement scams [here](#).

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