

5 RISKS

of Working with a Cheap Roofing Contractor



Are you looking for a roofing contractor to repair your roof leak or replace your roof altogether?

Are you trying to hire one based on price alone? If so, you're probably trying to find the cheapest contractor in your area. But when it comes to your roof, it definitely pays to be picky. Trust us- we've seen a LOT of roofs that were cheap to install, but expensive to fix.

Be warned, hiring a cheap one comes with multiple problems that will cause you headaches and stress. But what are these risks?

1. They might not be around when there's a problem

If you hire a newer roofing company that's only a couple of years old, chances are their prices will be the cheapest in your area. It can be tempting to hire these young roofing companies because of their low prices, but the problem is that they don't know how to price jobs correctly to have retained earnings at the end of the year to get them through the winter months.

This is when the cheaper roofing company will shut down, leaving your roof investment with no long-term protection. That's not to say there aren't good young companies in your area that do quality work.

However, five years from now, you want to make sure the company will still be there to take care of your roof investment and whatever problems come up. To get the best possible roofing services, it's crucial to hire a local roofing contractor that's established and has a strong history in your area.

To learn more about why you need to know how long a contractor has been around, read this article on why it matters how long a roofing contractor has been in business.

2. You get the quality you pay for

When you invest in a roof system, it's going to cost more for quality labor, roofing materials, and components. I understand everyone is on a budget, but if you hire the cheapest roofing contractor it's going to show up in the final quality of your roof.

For example, they could cut corners by not installing crucial components like drip edge and underlayment. No matter what crucial installation steps they skip, it will ultimately lead to roof leaks and more stress for you.

Hiring a cheap contractor means you'll get the cheapest components and cheapest labor available, which sets your roof up for premature failure right off the bat. That makes investing in quality from the beginning crucial anytime you need repairs or a full roof replacement.



3. You'll pay more money in the long run

Remember, when you hire the cheapest roofing contractor, it shows in the finished quality of your roof. Getting the cheapest roof possible might seem like your only option, but a roof is an investment.

The last thing you want is to pay more out of your pocket after spending thousands of dollars on a new roof. When you hire a cheap roofing contractor, that's exactly what will happen and you'll have roof problems sooner rather than later.

These problems might not show up right away, but eventually, you'll end up spending more money in the long run with repairs and eventually a full roof replacement. To learn more about how going with the cheapest options can affect your roof, read this article on 3 ways "cheap" roof systems cost you more in the long run.

4. Your roof won't live as long as it should

Just like hiring a cheap roofing contractor will affect the end quality of your roof and will cost you more money in the long run, it also affects your roof's lifespan. When you hire a contractor for their low price, I can guarantee your roof's life will not be what the contractor said it would be.

For example, a 3 tab asphalt shingle roof has a lifespan of around 25 years. When you hire the cheapest roofing contractor, you won't get anywhere near this lifespan.

The reason for this is you're going to get the cheapest materials and the cheapest labor to install your roof. This will lead to improper roof installation and other problems, which always lead to premature roof failure.

They could cut corners, use incorrect roofing techniques, or not check your attic for adequate ventilation. Problems might not show up right away from hiring a cheap roofing company, but eventually, your roof will have leaks.

5. You won't get the best warranties available

When you get a new roof, you'll have two warranties. You'll have one on the contractor's workmanship and one from the manufacturer on your roofing materials.

If you get a dimensional asphalt shingle roof and use all of the manufacturer's roofing components, you can register your roof with the manufacturer to receive an enhanced warranty. This warranty guarantees they'll cover labor, materials, dump fees, non-prorated for 50 years if there is a defect in their materials.

However, when you hire a contractor for their cheap prices, I can guarantee you won't qualify for the enhanced warranty. Even if you do somehow qualify for this warranty, it's highly likely it'll be voided because of improper installation or inadequate attic ventilation.

This only leaves the cheap roofing contractor's workmanship warranty to rely on. Because you used the cheapest company around, you're going to get anywhere from a tail light warranty (as soon as you see their company truck's tail lights disappear your warranty is gone), to a two-year, or possibly a five-year warranty.

It's highly unlikely a contractor is going to give more than a five-year warranty on their workmanship for something they know is going to have continuous problems down the road. They just want to get through the warranty period before your roof fails completely, and they have to pay to fix it.

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HOW DO YOU FIND A QUALITY ROOFING CONTRACTOR?

Now you know why you shouldn't hire a cheap roofing contractor and are probably asking what you should be looking for when hiring a roofing contractor.

Below are 5 questions you should ask every roofing contractor that you speak to.



Are you licensed, bonded, and insured?

The first thing you should ask a roofing contractor is if they're licensed and bonded, and insured.

- **Licensed:** For a contractor to get a license, all they have to do is register with the state's board of licensing contractors. The price of the job will determine what license they'll need.
- **Bonded:** Being bonded means that a bonding company knows that a contractor does business correctly and ethically. A bond ensures that if a company goes out of business during the middle of a job or if there's a problem with the work and they don't fix it, then the customer can fall back on the bond company.
- **Insured:** All contractors should be fully insured with general liability, workman's comp, and a company vehicle insurance policy on all the vehicles owned and unowned.

Don't be afraid to ask to see physical copies of each. Any roofing contractor with all three should be proud and more than happy to show you that paperwork.



Is your business local?

When looking at contractors to hire, it's crucial that you pick one that's local to your area. Always ask a roofing contractor where their physical office location is and make sure they have a local phone number. This ensures you know where to find them if you ever have a problem with your roof.

Be aware that some out-of-state companies come in after a big storm, undercut local roofing company prices, get the money, and move on to the next storm-hit town. These companies don't care about local codes or if they properly install your roof.

On the other hand, a quality local roofing company will know what local installation codes to follow, the paperwork required, and everything else they'll need to ensure your roof is correctly installed and in compliance with your state's requirements.



What is your workmanship warranty?

Roof warranties are in place to protect your roof investment. You'll have one on your roofing materials and another on the contractor's workmanship.

You must ask a roofing contractor what kind of warranty they offer on their workmanship. They could offer anywhere from one year, two years, three years, five years, 10 years, 25 years, or even a lifetime.

For example, a company that relies heavily on caulk will give a two-year workmanship warranty because the caulk will fail within a couple of years. However, if a roofing company really cares about how your roof is installed, they'll provide you with a lifetime warranty.



If I have a problem, can I talk to the owner?

You should always ask a contractor, "If there's a problem, who do I take it to?" The ability to speak to the owner about anything roofing is invaluable.

If they take time out of their day to listen to any concerns or questions, you can be well assured that your problem is their problem. However, if you're speaking to people in an office who have no authority, you'll end up being shuffled around from person to person until you get tired of dealing with the situation.

Whether it's the owner or the president, you want to know who you're dealing with and, more importantly, who to talk to when you have a problem. The ability to speak to an owner shows you that you're important and that you'll be taken care of from the very top.



Can you give me references?

Getting references from a contractor is crucial to hiring the right one. Ask every contractor that gives you an estimate to provide you with references from jobs completed in the past 3 to 6 months.

A reputable roofing contractor will be happy to give you these references when you ask for them. You can even double-check if the contractor gave you honest answers to the questions in this article by talking to past clients.

On the other hand, if they're not willing to give you references, don't even think about investing in your new roof with them.