



## Selecting An NRCA Professional Roofing Contractor (Low-slope Commercial)

Buying a new roof system is an important investment. Before you spend your money, spend some time learning how to evaluate the roofing contractor who may be doing the work. The National Roofing Contractors Association (NRCA) wants to assist you in getting the kind of results you expect—a quality roof system at a fair price. Roofing contractors are not all alike; insist on working with an NRCA-member professional roofing contractor.

An NRCA-member professional roofing contractor generally is recognized as a person who has hands-on experience and specialized knowledge and received intensive training. How can you tell a qualified contractor from an unqualified one? There are no foolproof methods, but there are some important things you can do to help make the best possible decision.

NRCA recommends you prequalify contractors. You can prequalify contractors on a project-to-project or annual basis if you regularly work with the same group of contractors. Your criteria may vary according to job requirements, but all NRCA-member professional roofing contractors should be able to provide you with the following:

- **A permanent place of business**

Confirm that your contractor is well-established with a permanent address, telephone number, tax identification number and, where required, business license. An NRCA-member professional roofing contractor has these readily available.

- **Knowledge of roof systems**

The introduction of new roofing materials and application techniques has sparked a tremendous change in the roofing industry during the past 10 years. An NRCA-member professional roofing contractor is familiar with the different types of roof systems and will help you make the best decision for your building and budget. Be sure you are comfortable with the roof system(s) your contractor suggests.

- **Affiliated with an industry organization**

Ask the contractor whether his or her company is a member of a local, state, regional or national roofing industry association, such as NRCA. Involvement in a professional organization(s) keeps a contractor better informed about the latest developments and issues in the industry.

- **Committed to education**

Choose a company that is committed to the safety and education of its workers. Ask the contractor what types of safety training he or she provides for workers and what industry programs the workers have attended. The best roofing contractor is only as good as the workers who install the roof system. Insist on having trained, experienced roof applicators perform the work.

- **Insured and committed to safety**

Don't hesitate to ask the roofing contractor for proof of insurance. In fact, insist on seeing copies of insurance certificates that verify workers' compensation and general liability coverages. Make sure the coverages are in effect through the duration of your job. If a contractor is not properly insured, you, the owner, may be liable for accidents that occur on the property. Many building owners and homeowners have been dragged into litigation involving uninsured roofing contractors. (Note: U.S. workers' compensation laws vary by state. Consult your state's laws to determine workers' compensation insurance requirements.)

- **Licensed and bonded**

Many states require roofing contractors to be licensed; some states have specific licensing requirements. In addition, some contractors are able to obtain bonding from surety companies, but others are not. Check to see whether a prospective roofing contractor is properly licensed and/or bonded. Your state's department of professional regulation or licensing board will have this information.

- **Financial stability**

A professional contractor will be able to supply you with current financial information. This could include financial statements and references from a financial institution or auditing firm.

- **Application expertise**

Have your contractor list the roofing manufacturers with which his or her firm has licensed or approved applicator agreements. Some materials require special application expertise to provide a quality roof system that will last.

- **Insist on a written proposal**

Insist on a written proposal and examine it for complete descriptions of the work and specifications. Be sure the proposal includes the approximate starting and completion dates, payment procedures, and any additional issues such as landscape damage prevention and debris cleanup.

- **Warranties**

There are two basic categories of roofing warranties: the contractor's warranty, which covers workmanship, and the manufacturer's warranty, which covers (as a minimum) materials. Be sure your contractor offers a warranty that covers workmanship. A manufacturer's warranty alone will not protect you if your roof system is improperly installed. Carefully read and understand any roofing warranty offered, and watch for provisions that would void it.

- **Completed projects**

Look for a company with a proven track record that readily offers client references and a list of completed projects.

- **References**

When making the final selection, ask the roofing contractor for a list of recent clients. Check with these customers to see whether they were completely satisfied with the quality of materials and workmanship provided. You also may contact the Better Business Bureau to find out whether any customer complaints have been filed against the contractor.

- **Provisions for on-site supervision**

Have the contractor explain his or her project supervision and quality-control procedures. Request the name of the person who will be in charge, how many workers will be required and the estimated time of completion.

- **A professional maintenance program**

NRCA-member professional roofing contractors will offer periodic maintenance inspections throughout the year. These inspections will help ensure your project complies with the standards specified in the warranty. A maintenance program usually consists of a detailed visual examination of the roof system, flashing, insulation and related components to identify any potential trouble areas.

NRCA, a nonprofit trade association, is one of the construction industry's most respected organizations and the voice and leading authority in the roofing industry for information, education, technology and advocacy.

NRCA offers a service to help building owners locate NRCA-member professional roofing contractors in specific geographic areas. NRCA's website allows roofing consumers to search for roofing contractors by ZIP code, type of roof system and radius; it also provides a wide range of information and services to help building owners and homeowners make informed decisions about replacing and maintaining their roof systems. This information can be obtained from NRCA's website at [www.nrca.net](http://www.nrca.net).

