

# BULLETIN

## COASTAL HAZARDS

### Choosing a Roofing Contractor

Before installing a new roof or having repairs made, carefully evaluate the contractor to assure the job is done properly. Below are things you may consider in choosing a contractor:

- ◆ Check for a permanent place of business, telephone number, tax identification number and, where applicable, a business license.
- ◆ Don't hesitate to ask a roofing contractor for proof of insurance. In fact, insist on seeing copies of his liability coverage and workers' compensation certificates. Make sure the coverages are in effect through the duration of the job. Many building and home owners have been dragged into litigation involving uninsured roofing contractors. Also, if a contractor is not properly insured, you may be liable for accidents that occur on your property.
- ◆ Check to see if the roofing contractor is properly registered and bonded. South Carolina requires all roofing contractors to be registered and, for jobs of \$5000 or more, to be bonded. To find out if your contractor fulfills these requirements, call the Contractors' Licensing Board at 803-896-4696.
- ◆ Make sure the contractor is financially stable. A professional roofing contractor can provide current financial information about the company.
- ◆ Look for a company with a proven track record that offers client references and a list of completed projects. Call these clients to find out whether they were satisfied.
- ◆ Insist on a detailed, written proposal and examine it for complete descriptions of the work and specifications, including approximate starting and completion dates and payment procedures.

- ◆ Have the contractor list the roofing manufacturers with which his firm is a licensed or approved applicator. Most roof systems require special application expertise to achieve lasting quality.
- ◆ Have the contractor explain his project supervision and quality control procedures. Request the name of the person who will be in charge of your project, how many workers will be required and estimated completion time.
- ◆ Check to see if the contractor is a member of any regional or national industry associations. Being a member of industry associations demonstrates a commitment to professionalism.
- ◆ Contact your local Better Business Bureau to check for complaints filed against the contractor.
- ◆ Carefully read and understand any roofing warranty offered, and watch for provisions that would void it.
- ◆ Choose a company committed to worker safety education. Ask the contractor what type of safety training is provided for workers and what industry education programs they have attended. The best roofing contractor is only as good as the workers who install the roof system.
- ◆ Be skeptical about lowest bids or those considerably lower than the others written for the same work. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Many below-cost bids seem attractive, but these contractors often are uninsured and perform substandard work. Remember, price is only one of the criteria for selecting a roofing contractor. Professionalism, experience and quality workmanship should also weigh heavily in your decision.

You may also contact the National Roofing Contractor's Association at 1-800-USA-ROOF (872-7663) or <http://nrca.net> for assistance in locating a professional contractor in a specific geographic area.

Compiled from "A Home Owner's Guide to Buying a New Roof", published by the National Roofing Contractor's Association, Washington D.C. <http://nrca.net/>