
SAVAGE

ROOFING INC.

“Quality Roofing Since 1942”

Hard hitting, Straight to the Point Tips Every Homeowner Should Know Before Hiring a Contractor

At Savage we truly care about our customers getting the best roofing system possible. We feel that part of the process is educating our customers about the roofing industry, so they can make an informed decision on who their contractor will be. We install roofs the right way, we don't cut corners, and we won't compromise your roofing system in order to be the cheapest bidder. This philosophy allows us to be consistent in the way we do business and allows us to communicate honestly with every customer. We approach every project the same way, we have standardized pricing, and we know what it takes to do it right. Whether you choose Savage for your project or not, you can always use these tips in selecting a contractor for any type of home improvement project. Everyone has either experienced, or heard a bad contractor story. Unfortunately, most of these situations could have been avoided if homeowners would have taken the time to do their homework.

Interview your Contractor.....

Make sure that you interview your contractor; many times homeowners will meet with their contractors only when it is time to select materials for their project, most likely this contractor had the best price. It's usually inconvenient for most people to interview potential contractors, they simply don't have the time. This is a HUGE MISTAKE and probably the #1 reason for getting a bad job! Unfortunately, a mistake in roofing usually results in damage to other parts of the home due to leaking, and is usually not discovered until the contractor is long gone. When the roof does fail, hopefully the contractor is still in business, has proper insurance to cover the damages, and will honor their warranty. I can assure, you and your spouse will save on stress, and money by sacrificing a little time up front in order to make an educated decision on who your contractor will be. Typically every roof is different in some way, and there are many aspects of your roof that determine which system will be the best for you in order to meet your goals. *If you don't meet with your contractor:* How can you be sure you are going to get what you need? How can the contractor be sure of what you need? Have you seen the materials you are considering to use on your roof? Most homeowners have seen the materials used on the outside of a roof, but what about the internal parts of your roofing system that are more critical? How did the contractor explain his proposal in detail to you, so you understand how his system works, and know exactly what you are getting? How did they determine type and condition of your sheathing, and that your low-end ventilation is functioning properly without inspecting your attic? If the contractor is willing to cut corners on communication up front while trying to *win* your business, what will happen when they have it?

Can they really back up what they are telling you?

Be aware that most companies will send their best people out to meet with you, because they want the best representation for their company—we do the same thing. During your interview process, there are a few things to keep in mind. Do you feel confident that this person has the knowledge and experience to perform the work they are talking about? Were you presented with information that supports what they are saying? Was the condition of your roof communicated clearly to you? Did they answer your questions? Do you feel the company they represent can actually perform the work being proposed? Were you provided phone numbers to call and check out contractors? Did they provide you with references? Do you feel they gathered enough information to put together a proposal that will meet your needs? How long have they been in business? Are the workers factory trained and certified for the materials that are being offered? How long is the warranty? Is the warranty transferable? Are they willing to remove components and compromise your roofing system in an effort to save money? *(Note: There is only one way to install a roof properly, the only choice that you would really have is the type of material and color that you would like. A reputable company will not compromise the way they install roofing systems because of the huge risk in liability).* The bottom line here is; Does the company have the systems in place to back up what they are telling you on the front end?

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I'll See you later.....

Be very cautious of a company that requires a large deposit to get on their schedule. A modest deposit of 10% should be enough to get you on the schedule. Most of us have heard stories about the contractor that collected a deposit, and was never seen again. There are company's that specialize in this, they will target an area sell projects, and then file bankruptcy only to start another company somewhere else. Large deposits are probably a sign that the company is having financial difficulties and needs that money to pay for materials, or meet payroll, why else would they need a large deposit? A solid company will have enough cash in reserves to handle payroll, and material purchases on your project. Paying large deposits is a very risky proposition for homeowners.

I must have made a mistake, \$orry.....

There are un-visible problems that a contractor couldn't possibly include in their proposals, such as dry-rot. However, anything that is visible should be included in your proposal. Believe it or not there are contractors that will give you a proposal for a 20 square job, when you really have a 30 square job. The goal is to make you believe they are the lowest bidder. Their contracts are designed to protect them, so when they need more labor and materials to complete your project, guess who pays. You should make sure that the company you select has committed to doing the project for the price that was proposed in writing. If a company does not have the knowledge and experience to give you an accurate proposal, how in the world are they going to perform the work?

We want your money.....

There are also contractors that will allow you to dictate how your roof should be installed as long as you sign a waiver that says it's been explained to you and they assume no liability for the failure of your roof. Example; There needs to be more low-end ventilation added to your roofing system to keep the manufacturers warranty (there is a calculated formula for figuring this out), however the contractor options the low-end ventilation as long as you sign the waiver. The question here is integrity! Why would a company allow you to tell them how to install a roof, aren't they supposed to be the professional? What happens when the roof fails? Is this a company that really cares about installing a quality roof? Why would a company want to stick their name on a roof that is not installed properly? The bottom line; the company cares only about taking your money, despite the consequences of having a reputation for installing bad roofs. Unfortunately, around 40% of the roofs we replace are still under a warranty because the original roof was not installed properly. The philosophy here is usually, "Well if their going to spend the money, they may as well spend it with me". Company's like this really hurt the roofing industry in general by compromising themselves to everyone. Since all they care about is money they usually pay their employees a lot less than industry standards, and have under-qualified, under-experienced workers. You would be better served by finding a way to do it yourself properly.

I don't remember \$aying that, its not in my proposal.....

Deciphering all the information you receive can be overwhelming. It can be especially frustrating if everything is verbalized, and not in writing. How are you to compare? Make sure that before you do anything that everything is in writing. You should have in writing what the scope of work is, materials that are being used, and how they will be installed. Contractors are vague with their proposals on purpose. If it is not in writing chances are you will not get it, never accept a verbal commitment. Be cautious of going back to a contractor and having him "fill in the blanks", Why didn't he include it in the first place? Is it because he is not experienced enough to install what is missing?, or Is he just willing to compromise your roofing system so you see him as the low bidder? This philosophy is a mystery?, How does a company expect to establish a good reputation, and grow their business if they are misleading people?

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Why is insurance so important, don't all contractors have to carry insurance?

The answer is yes, all contractors must have insurance in order to operate a roofing company legally. To protect yourself, it's a good idea to call the insurance company to confirm that it is active, and what amount the company is insured for. Contractors will sometimes operate with inadequate, or even no insurance at all. The reason contractors have insurance is to protect you in the event that anything goes wrong. If a company has the minimum insurance required which is about 300,000 and a roofer falls off the roof, who do you think they would go after? A broke roofing company, or the homeowner? An example of this just recently happened in California to a former Savage Roofing employee. He belongs to the roofers union, and they were slow, so he was doing a side job to make extra cash. Unfortunately, he fell off the roof and is currently in a wheel chair after some surgeries. He is going after the homeowners for the money. He is a veteran roofer and would have done a fantastic job, while also saving the homeowners some money. The bottom line here is don't take a contractors word for it, pick up the phone and call the contractors insurance company, department of L&I, and the Department of Licensing to make sure they are legitimate.

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HOW DO YOU MAKE YOUR DECISIONS?

At some point all roofing companies must make a decision about how they would like to do business. We can either cut corners and design roofing systems to do as little as possible so we could sell them as cheap as possible, or we could design and build roofing systems that will hold their value and save our customers a substantial amount of money over time. At Savage Roofing we chose to design roofing systems to last, it's because of this over 50% of our work comes from referrals. Doing business this way also allows us to be completely up front and honest with our customers, we don't have to hide anything in our contracts, and we can communicate everything clearly. When looking at roofing companies it's important that you look at what value they bring to you, as a homeowner. Usually, if we purchase something that is cheap, we also understand that it will probably not last. This same rule also applies to roofing, and for this reason about 40% of the roofs we replace are still under warranty. Unfortunately the roofing industry is an unregulated industry, so there is no one that is going to make sure that your roof is installed properly. It also means that it is very easy to start a roofing company with very little experience. Choosing a roofing company is a big decision, and a big investment. Our goal is to educate you about the roofing industry so that you can make a sound decision in selecting a roofing contractor that will best meet your needs. If you are looking for a cheap roof there are plenty of roofing companies to choose from, but very few quality oriented contractors. Over the years we have served over 15,000 customers, and have grown year after year with very little advertising. In business for 64 years, we have survived the ups and downs of the economy, and gained invaluable experience on how to better serve our customers. We also understand what it takes to do the job right, we have standardized pricing, and we are up front and honest in how we approach every customer.