DON'T Hire a Roofing or Solar Contractor Until You Read This!

Sniff Out The Scum

The Insider's Guide to Choosing The Right Roofing & Solar Contractor

ROOFING & SOLAR REFORM ALLIANCE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Dear Property Owner,

Greed and Corruption have poisoned the industry. That's why 8 out of 10 property owners don't trust roofing and solar contractors. Unfortunately, it's for good reason.

Search "Roofing News" and your results will be flooded with scams, theft, deaths, and fines for illegal practices. It's no wonder that property owners like you have your guard up when it comes to choosing a contractor.

This guide was prepared by the Roofing & Solar Reform Alliance (RSRA) with the goal of empowering property owners to confidently choose the right contractor, so they don't get featured in the latest scam that blankets the news

If you were given this guide, it means that the contractor you are considering is an active Member of the Roofing & Solar Reform Alliance.

Learn more about our mission and verify their Membership status at www.rsra.org under the "Member Directory."

Now let's get started by helping you hire the right contractor, even if they're not an RSRA member.

Who is the Roofing & Solar Reform Alliance (RSRA)?

You may recognize RSRA from your local news station, or major networks like Fox News, NBC, ABC, CBS, and USA Today.

Every single Member is required to take our Pledge and abide by our code of conduct. Our Pledge:

1. To provide an amazing customer **service** experience.
2. To provide a transparent and educational **sales** experience.
3. To take extreme **ownership** as leaders of one's self and one's team.
4. To create a **culture** that our customers and employees are proud to be part of.
5. To be a **steward** of those we serve and the industry at large.

Any member who violates our Pledge will be kicked out and denied re-entry. If you're wondering how we police our Members, here's how. First, fellow Members self-police RSRA, as it only takes one bad apple to ruin the bunch. Second, we have a Complaint form listed at the bottom of our website www.rsra.org in which property owners can submit violations through our website.

Violations and or complaints are taken to our Committee who will determine if the Member should be removed from RSRA.

Now that you know who prepared this guide, and what it's for, let's jump right into helping you hire the right contractor – for you.

Tell-Tale Signs Your Contractor is Scum, or a Saint

Deception, lies, misleading statements, or grandiose promises are sleazy tactics used by many to earn your business. These may sound enticing, exciting, or even “too good to be true” at first. But as projects hum along, your internal alarm bells will start ringing.

The easiest way to determine if a contractor is operating with your best interest at heart is:

> **They do what they say they are going to do.**

If a contractor promises to follow up, deliver information, or communicate next steps and they don’t, that should be a huge red flag. If the contractor can’t keep their word before they even earn your business, imagine what will happen once your check clears.

Next, the right contractor will provide highly-detailed information regarding your project. In other words, they should:

> **Tell you exactly what they’re going to do.**

This may sound stupid simple, and it should be. But unfortunately, many contractors are notorious for what we call “loosey goose” estimates. Why? Because they prey on the fact that property owners don’t understand the intricacies of their roofing or solar project.

To many property owners, if the roof comes off and goes back on, then they have a new roof. And that’s exactly what predatory contractors want you to think. This is one of the most common tactics used by contractors to dupe homeowners.

They’ll prepare an estimate with little to no detail, and then a price. Now, the lay person, they think that all estimates are created equal. Because after all, it’s just a roof replacement, right?

Not so fast. Roofs, although seemingly simple, are complex systems. Systems that require that their installation follow both local building codes and manufacturers’ recommendations.

The tricky part is that enforcement upon these practices is very limited. Meaning contractors can get away with making on-the-fly decisions about installation practices and the materials used. This is exactly what many contractors do who appear to be the most competitive on price. They’ll try and make up for the lowball estimate during the install without you knowing it.

What does this mean to you? Re-using building materials (like flashing) that could be 10, 20, or even 30 years old! Then expecting it to last another 20 to 30 years or more on your roof! In addition to re-using old, worn out materials, they will buy the cheapest materials possible.

They think they can get away with this because they never told you exactly what they'd be using. Imagine if you were spending your hard earned money on a beautiful new kitchen.

Would you spend $20,000 on a kitchen remodel if you had no idea what type of countertops or cabinets you'd be getting?

Of course not! You'd want to know exactly what type of material was being used to make sure you were getting what you paid for, and what you deserve. Imagine then if you ended up in court with your contractor who was doing the kitchen remodel because you didn't get quality countertops or cabinets. Imagine the judge looking at the contract and saying, "Sorry, but the contract doesn't specify what products would be used, so you're out of luck."

It feels criminal, doesn't it? The problem is, if it's not itemized and detailed, there's no legal recourse or accountability. That's why it's vitally important to choose a contractor who says exactly what they'll do, and does what they say they're going to do.

But The Other Contractor Was Cheaper?

You want a fair investment. You don't want to feel like you're overpaying. So naturally, you want to get a few estimates. Many property owners choose the middle because they know that the cheapest sacrifices quality, and the most expensive is probably "too much." But is that the best way?

Before we go any further, you must know that RSRA does not profit from your roofing or solar project. Our Members pay fixed rate annual dues. This information is not designed to coerce you into signing a contract, but rather to inform you about the industry and what happens behind closed doors.

Hiring an expensive contractor costs a lot? Try a cheap one...

Roofing contractors top the charts when it comes to contractor complaints. When investigated further, you'll find that the top complaints are from homeowners who chose the cheapest contractor. Our members have countless stories of fixing or replacing shoddy workmanship from "the cheaper contractor."

Like the couple who chose the cheaper contractor, and one year later had a leak near their chimney. The couple called their roofer to have it fixed since it was still under warranty. No one answered. No one called her back. The contractor had gone out of business.

The couple called the more expensive roofing company who they did not hire to come out and help. Upon inspecting the roof, the roofer noticed horrific installation practices, cut corners, and improper flashing around the chimney. It was truly irreparable. The only long-term fix was to replace the roof.

The couple ended up replacing the roof a second time, only after spending thousands to professionally clean their carpets, the couch, and repaint the entire ceiling of their open concept floor plan (since you can't just repaint one section without it standing out).

Don’t Get DUPED

Now you know the sleazy, slimy, scummy tactics used by shoddy contractors. If you see an estimate that’s short and simple with a dollar amount, run for the hills. You know that the contractor has purposefully left out details so they can’t be held accountable. So they can cut corners on the installation. So they can use whatever material they want. They know there’s not much you can do about it.

A word of caution. If you compare estimates side by side with these shady roofing contractors, they’ll often say things like, “Yeah we’re doing that too!” But how do you know if it’s not in writing? What does it say about the contractor who isn’t willing to put it down in writing?

The best thing you can do to avoid getting duped is ask yourself if you can answer the following questions yourself by reading their estimate:

> What type of shingle are they using?
>
> What type of ridge cap are they using?
>
> What type of underlayment are they using?
>
> Are they using ice and water shield (peel and stick)?
>
> Are they re-using or replacing the flashing?
>
> Are they re-using or replacing my drip edge and rake edge metal?
>
> Did they give me a choice in color for my drip edge and rake edge metal?
>
> If my roof has valleys, how are they installing them?
>
> Are they painting my pipe jacks to match the shingles? Or leaving them white?

If you cannot get answers to these questions from the estimate alone, then they are likely trying to dupe you!

A reputable contractor should be confident in going through any competing estimates side by side, breaking down the differences with you, even if you don’t choose them. Everything should be in writing. Do not trust a contractor who says, “We’ll do that too.” If it’s not in writing, it likely isn’t getting done. And if they say, “I’ll add that in,” then ask yourself, “What was their intention of leaving it out in the first place?” This is how you can sniff out the scum and choose the right roofing and solar contractor for you.

Insurance Claim? NEW REGULATIONS: Even if You've Been Through it Before

Replacing your roof as an insurance claim? There's no shortage of roofing contractors soliciting you for business. Your door has probably been knocked on hundreds of times. Roofers are probably promising you the world! "Get a roof practically free!" Or "We'll even pay your deductible!"

Many property owners who are going through this process think that it's much like dealing with an auto claim. When dealing with an auto claim, the insurance company writes a check for the damage, you shop around for who can give you the best deal, and if you're lucky, you don't even have to pay your deductible. Heck, some people could even pocket a little extra money!

But roof claims are NOT like that, even if roofers lead you to believe that's the case. How they are handled is much, much different. The rest of this Guide will help you sniff out the scum, so you can choose the right contractor for you.

How Insurance Money Works

Insurance carriers are cracking down on roof insurance claims and how they are paid. Why? Because of the many slimy roofing contractors who have lied, cheated, stolen, and conducted insurance fraud.

Let's cover the basic terms of how the insurance money works:

DEDUCTIBLE

"The amount of money that the insured person must pay before their insurance policy starts paying for covered expenses." – The Department of Insurance. It's similar to a medical co-pay. Example: If your medical co-pay was $1,000 and you went in for a $20,000 surgery, you'd owe the first $1,000, and the insurance company would pay the remaining $19,000. If the surgery ended up being even more expensive than expected ($25,000) your contribution would be the same $1,000. Likewise, if the surgery was less than expected, say $15,000, do they write you a check and say thanks for saving us money? No. You owe the same $1,000. That's how roof deductibles work.

REPLACEMENT COST VALUE (RCV)

This is the total cost to replace your roof (and any other damaged building material).

ACTUAL CASH VALUE (ACV)

This is what we refer to as the "used car price." This is what your "used" roof is worth today. This is typically the first check you'll receive (minus your deductible).

DEPRECIATION

This is the calculated difference between the ACV and RCV above.

So how does the money actually work?

Here's an example breakdown assuming you have Replacement Cost Value coverage. Please note: This is an example. Your policy details, coverage, and deductible may be different. It is your responsibility to verify your own coverage.

EXAMPLE:

$20,000 Replacement Cost Value (Total value of the claim).

-$1,000 Deductible (You owe this. The insurance company pays everything after).

-$9,000 Actual Cash Value (This is the initial compensation you'll get).

$10,000 Recoverable Depreciation (Released after the work is done & invoiced).

The Other Guy Said He'd Pay My Deductible

You've heard this before, haven't you? "I'll eat your deductible." Or, "I'll pay your deductible." And sometimes you'll even have people promise to put money back in your pocket.

But did they explain how they could do that? Your answer is likely, "No, they just said they could." So may we explain what's going on behind your back? This could get you into some legal trouble as the insurance companies and legislation is cracking down all across the US.

The only way to release the Recoverable Depreciation (the settlement funds left over) is by invoicing the insurance company. So if they are claiming to eat your deductible here's what's going on behind your back.

They are providing a false invoice to the insurance company stating they did all the work for the total amount of the Recoverable Depreciation. Then, they send you a lower invoice.

We've heard some property owners say, "Who cares?" Here's why you should care. Providing false or misleading information to an insurance carrier is classified as Insurance Fraud, which is a Federal Offense.

That means that the contractor has put you as a willing participant of insurance fraud behind your back. Have people gotten away with it? Yes. But things are changing, and they are changing fast.

Search "Webb Roofing Scam" on the internet and you'll find plenty of articles on the case details.

> **The alleged could face up to 45 years in prison.**

When you investigate these details even further, you'll find that they didn't outright eat the deductible. They tried to get clever by offering an "advertising agreement" to compensate the property owner the exact amount of their deductible to place a yard sign on their property.

Here are two other new ways that insurance carriers and legislation is tightening things up.

1. Many states already have active laws requiring that homeowners pay their deductible. Other states are in the process of enacting these laws.

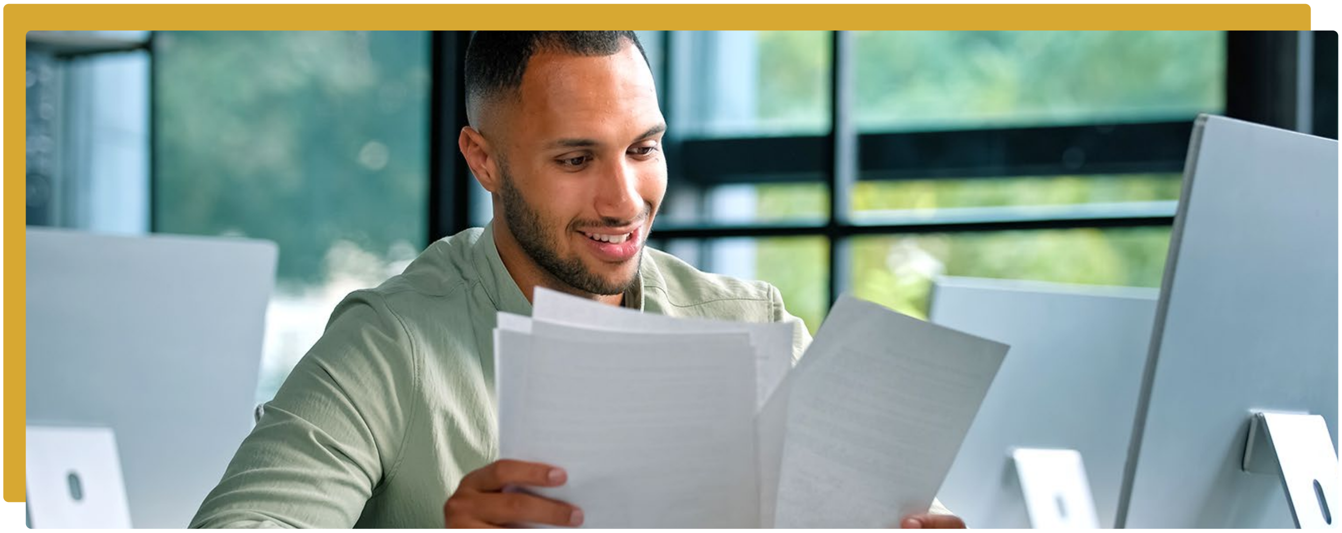
2. Many insurance companies are requiring proof of deductible payment before they'll release the Recoverable Depreciation. That means if you get duped into signing a contract with someone who says they can eat your deductible, when it comes time for payment the contractor won't even be able to!

This is why, when dealing with an insurance claim, you can and should choose anyone that you like and trust to do your roof.

My Insurance Company Told Me to Get 3 Estimates

You've heard this recommendation from your insurance company? "Before you choose a contractor, it's important that you get 3 estimates." As we covered before, your contribution is your deductible, and then your coverage kicks in. So if you find a contractor who can do it for less, does that mean you don't have to pay your deductible? NO. You still owe your deductible.

Knowing this, don't you wonder, "Why would I get 3 estimates if what I'm paying is my deductible no matter what?" You don't need to get three estimates. What you need to focus on is finding the right contractor who will state everything they are going to do, do it, and stand behind their work. Shopping based on price alone is doing yourself a disservice because ultimately your contribution does not change.



Imagine that you were going in for knee surgery. Your medical co-pay was $1,000. One surgeon could do it for $15,000. Another surgeon quoted $20,000. And a final surgeon quoted $25,000. Knowing that your medical co-pay was $1,000 whether it was $15,000 or $25,000 – which surgeon would you choose? Chances are, you'd choose the surgeon who was the most credible, had the most expertise, and the one you felt most comfortable with, right?

The same concept applies to your roof. If you question this, please contact your insurance agent and/or claims office and ask, "If I find someone to do it cheaper, does that mean I don't have to pay my deductible, or I can keep the extra money?" You'll see for yourself that the answer is "No. You still owe your deductible."

You do not need to get three estimates, and price should not matter. You'll find many contractors who will promise to do it cheaper, but at what cost? It's empowering to know that you truly can and should choose the contractor who you like, trust, and has your best interests at heart.

I'll Keep The Money and NOT Do My Roof

In today's economy, the idea of pocketing thousands of dollars can be very tempting. Especially if you feel that your roof isn't in that bad of shape. But before you do that, it's important to understand what that means for you.

First, let's address why the insurance company is paying to replace your roof. It's the single most expensive maintenance item on your home, and its lifespan is compromised.

Imagine this.

Say you got a brand new car. You'd expect it to last 200,000 miles right? Well, what if the neighborhood kids stole it, and while driving down the road at 45 mph they threw it in reverse. Would the transmission last 200,000 miles? NO. Would you do something about it? Of course!

The same thing is happening to your roof. The lifespan has been compromised – cut short. That means you'll be paying with your hard-earned money to replace your roof sooner than you would have otherwise needed to.

With inflation and supply chain issues, the industry has experienced substantial price increases 3-5x per year.

The price of roofing materials has been going up as fast as a runaway freight train.

So if you decide to pocket the money and not do the roof, here's what will likely happen. In two, five, or ten years from now, you'll be contacting a roofer to replace your roof with your hard-earned money. But instead of paying today's rates, you'll be paying thousands (if not tens of thousands) of dollars more. In fact, during the industry's historic rate increases, some contractors reported that waiting just 1 year cost property owners an additional $5,000 – $9,000 dollars! Next is the harsh reality of what happens if you keep the money and don't replace your roof.

Your roof is no longer insured.

Because you cannot collect on a claim two times (unless you did the work). So even if severe weather tears your entire roof off, and it's laying in the neighbor's yard, your roof is no longer insured. Because they already paid for it once.

Many members of the Roofing & Solar Reform Alliance have experienced this themselves. They've been contacted by a property owner for roof damage who has filed a claim, and the insurance company denied coverage because the property owner had collected on a roof claim years ago and never did the work. The property owner would then have to pay out of pocket for the entire roof replacement, costing them many thousands (or even tens of thousands) more.

It gets worse. If you don't replace your roof, and your roof is no longer insured, your premiums likely don't change! You'll be paying the same premiums, even though your roof is no longer insured.

If you want to save money and protect your property, you'll want to choose the contractor who you like and trust to replace your roof.

Ask These 5 Questions to Sniff Out The Scum!

You've made it this far. Congratulations! You're likely in the top 1% of informed property owners. You've had a peak behind the curtains and have insider information to choose the right contractor for you.

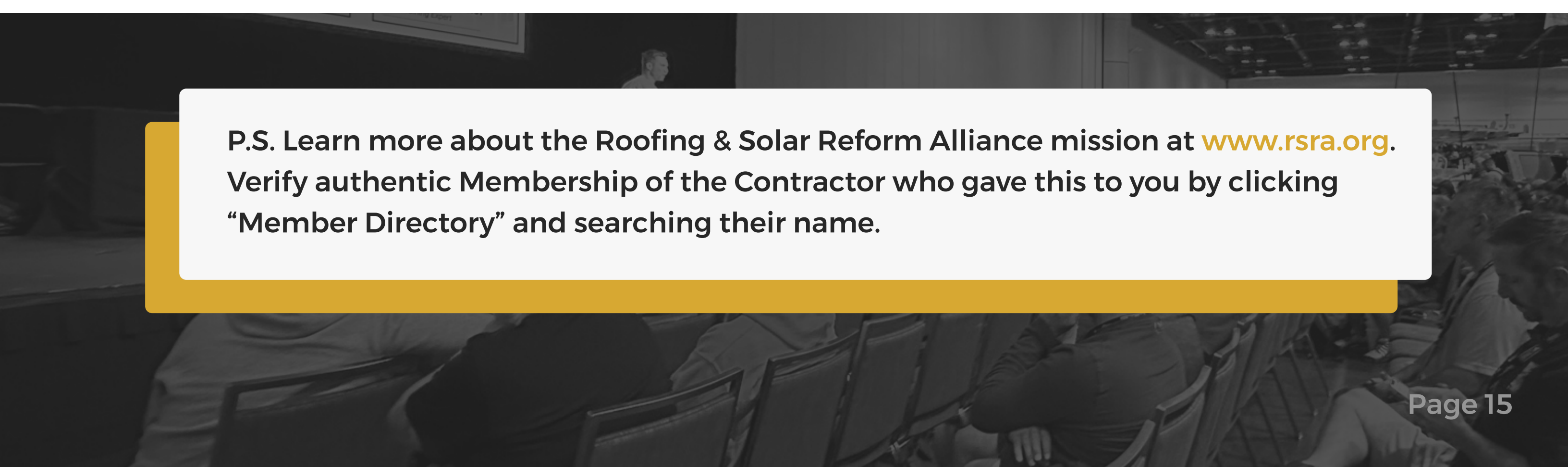
Here are 5 simple questions to ask yourself about the contractors you're speaking with. How you answer these questions will help you make the best choice for you. It'll be an obvious "gut" reaction. And that's ok. Because you can and should choose the contractor that you like, trust, and has your best interest at heart.

1. Are they accredited or endorsed by reputable organizations?
2. Are they trying to dupe you?
3. Did they say exactly what they'll do (and put it in writing)?
4. Are they trying to win you over with the cheapest bid?
5. Did they make outlandish or fishy promises?

Use these 5 questions as your "pulse check" with every contractor you speak with. Thank you again for investing your valuable time reading this guide. We truly hope it leads you to having an amazing experience with the contractor you choose. If you haven't yet done it, contact the contractor who gave this to you. Run through these 5 questions with them and trust your gut.

Sincerely,

The Roofing & Solar Reform Alliance



P.S. Learn more about the Roofing & Solar Reform Alliance mission at www.rsra.org. Verify authentic Membership of the Contractor who gave this to you by clicking "Member Directory" and searching their name.