

Thinking about replacing your roof?

Maybe it's been a while, or maybe your shingles don't quite match your new siding, or maybe there's a leak in the roof causing a stain in your living room. Whatever the reason, replacing your roof is a big undertaking, and it takes research and information to do it right.

First, you need to know how to safeguard your roof in the first place. Then, you need to know how to find a contractor and what to consider when comparing bids. Then, you need to know what can go wrong with your roof so you can help protect it. Finally, you need to know what questions to ask when you're talking with a contractor so you can make the best decision.



preventing damage

Choosing the right contractor is important, but you play an important role in keeping your roof in good shape. Doing these simple things can help your roof last:

Keep gutters clear so rain water can drain properly.

Keep debris from building up on your roof by keep gutters cleared and by cleaning off your roof -- especially after heavy storms that could knock down tree branches.

Keep all trees trimmed and cut back from the roof at least five to six feet.

When you have other work done on your home, make sure you don't compromise your roof -- especially if the work affects your attic, ventilation or siding.



finding a contractor

talk to your friends

Ask your friends and coworkers for referrals and for their lessons learned. If all else fails, consult the phone book and make a list of four or five contractors to contact.

do your homework

Before you call the contractors, call the Allen County Building Department and the Better Business Bureau to find out if there are unresolved complaints about any of the contractors on your list.

call for bids

When you call the contractors to ask for a bid, be sure to tell them about any issues you're experiencing with your current roof, like leaks or curling shingles. The contractors will need to visit your home to look at your roof, to take measurements and to identify any additional issues with your current roof. Be sure to ask about the process and timeline. It's important for you to have realistic expectations and to be able to hold the contractor accountable for meeting those expectations.

compare the quotes

After your homework, you should end up with three or four bids to compare. Be certain you are comparing apples to apples. Do all three bids include replacing the felt? Do they all use the same roofing system and quality of shingles? Are the bids taking into consideration special needs like precautions against ice buildup or ventilation?



threats to your roof

ice dams

The heat from your home can cause ice and snow closest to the roof's surface to melt. If the snow is deep or ice has formed, the thick layers prevent the melted snow and ice from escaping, and it can damage your roof. This may be preventable with increased insulation and an ice shield.

condensation

Inadequate ventilation or framing cavities that are blocked off are two of the reasons condensation can build up. A new humidifier that's turned up too high or dryer vents and bathroom fans that aren't routed correctly can also cause condensation to build up. Ask your contractor how to address these issues with extra ventilation or fans.

blowing rain and snow

Winds that blow at just the right angle, can cause rain and snow -- especially cold, powdery snow -- to enter vents and cause damage. Your contractor can look at the vents at your house and determine if something can be done to prevent this or if you will just need to be vigilant about watching for blowing rain and snow.

workmanship

Workmanship is key to your roof lasting long and looking great. It's also part of meeting the requirements of the manufacturer's warranty. That's why it's so important for you to select the right contractor to work on your home.



quiz the contractors

Here's a list of questions to get you started...and we've left room for you to add a few of your own.

Are you insured?

Are you licensed in Allen County?

What product is best for my house?

Should I do a "cover-up" or a "tear-off"?

Cover-up: Shingles are placed over your existing shingles. State Building Code does not allow more than three layers and generally, it is not recommended that there be more than two layers.

Tear-off: The old shingles and felt are taken off and replaced.

Can you install that product/system?

It's important to the life of your roof and to the warranty that the contractor you hire is qualified to install the necessary system.

What will my quote include?

What will the process include?

What will my warranty mean?

What unexpected things could come up and add additional cost?

What else could cause leaks or other problems (for example, skylights or siding)?



contacts

Allen County Building Department

(260) 449-7131

www.allencounty.us

Better Business Bureau

(260) 423-4433

WEBSITE

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Roofing 101

what you should know
about replacing your roof

checklist for finding a contractor
dangers to your roof
questions to ask
community contacts