HOMEOWNER RESOURCE GUIDE 1

The Homeowner's Guide to Roofing

What to know before choosing materials, comparing estimates, and hiring a contractor.

Presented by the Roofing Contractors Association of Southern California | Serving the Industry Since 1936

A roof is a major investment. Use this guide to understand when to seek an inspection, how to evaluate options, and what to confirm before work begins.

Does your roof need attention?

- Watch for missing, cracked, curling, or displaced roofing; damaged flashing; interior stains; or recurring leaks.
- Roof age can be a factor, but useful life depends on material, climate, installation, and maintenance. A roof does not automatically need replacement at a specific age.
- A leak does not always mean the entire roof must be replaced. Ask a qualified contractor to explain repair and replacement options.

Choosing a roofing contractor

- Interview more than one contractor and compare the proposed scope, not just the price.
- Verify the contractor's California license and check available complaint and workers' compensation information through the CSLB. Ask for current insurance details and confirm coverage with the insurer when appropriate.
- Request recent references, examples of similar projects, and an explanation of who will supervise the work.
- Avoid high-pressure sales tactics. Ask questions until you understand the proposal.
- For a detailed interview worksheet, use RCASoCal Guide 3: Questions to Ask Before Hiring a Roofing Contractor.

Why roofing estimates differ

- Bids may specify different materials, underlayments, flashing, ventilation, removal methods, disposal, or warranty coverage.
- Ask each contractor to identify the roof area and explain how quantities and allowances were calculated.
- Request good / better / best options when suitable, with clear explanations of cost and performance differences.
- Discuss possible hidden decking or structural damage, unit prices for additional work, and the written approval process before work starts.

What should be in writing?

- ☐ Contractor identity and license number; complete scope of work and materials, including manufacturer, product, and color
- ☐ Price, payment schedule, start and estimated completion dates, and change-order procedure
- ☐ Tear-off, decking, flashing, ventilation, cleanup, debris removal, and weather protection responsibilities
- ☐ Permit and inspection responsibilities, if applicable
- ☐ Separate descriptions of material and workmanship warranties and any registration requirements
- ☐ Insurance information and applicable lien-release documentation

Understanding warranties

- Material warranties and contractor workmanship warranties are different; request both in writing.
- Read exclusions, transferability, proration, registration requirements, and whether labor or disposal is covered.
- Do not assume a product marketed with a 30-year term provides full replacement coverage for 30 years.
- Ask whether manufacturer certification affects available warranty options.

Before signing

Check current CSLB consumer guidance for California home improvement contract requirements, payment limitations, and cancellation rights. Never rely solely on a verbal promise. Keep copies of the signed agreement and changes.

Find a roofing professional

Explore the RCASoCal member directory at www.rcasocal.org. Verify California contractor license status and related records independently at www.cslb.ca.gov.

Important note

This guide provides general educational information, not legal, engineering, or warranty advice. RCASoCal provides a directory of association members but does not guarantee, warrant, or represent any contractor or their workmanship. Membership is not a substitute for independently verifying qualifications, insurance, references, and license status. Requirements vary by project and jurisdiction.