

# ROOFING ROULETTE

Troubled with  
Roofing Decisions?



**BETTING ON  
THE RIGHT ROOFER**

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# DON'T GAMBLE WITH YOUR ROOF!



Understanding your roof and its needs can be a complicated thing. It is important to stay informed about common roofing issues and maintenance practices to ensure the longevity of your home's protection.

Doug Kerr noticed that roofing work could be done better, so he launched his own roofing company in 1998. Since then, his business has become one of the leading choices for roofing in the Lower Mainland, known for its high standards. Doug's commitment to quality has made his company a trusted name in the industry, ensuring homes are well-protected from the elements.

After his experiences with roofers as a general contractor and studying the industry in-depth, Doug decided that property owners needed to be better educated about roofing in general so they could make the right decisions about the roofing solutions needed for their building – whether a private residence, multi-family dwelling or commercial property.

Hence, this booklet's information can save you thousands of dollars and a lot of grief.

# CHAPTER 1

## Do you need a New Roof Right Now?

Maybe your roof is starting to look a little old, it may have some moss on it, or you are just not sure about its current condition. Your roof may not have had a leak yet, but you may want to prevent a potential emergency and water damage. It would be nice to know if you just need some maintenance and repairs for now that will prolong the life of your roof or whether you need to bite the bullet and do a whole new reroof.



How do you get good, honest information on this so you can make the right decision? If you don't have a roofing contractor you know and trust, a good idea is to get a Condition Report done by of an independent roofing inspector. Don't use a home inspector for this as they are not roofing specialists. Also, be careful not to have just any roofing company inspect unless you know and trust them. Hire an inspection company that has certified Roof Observers on staff. They will not have a vested interest in steering you one way or the other because their business is Roof inspections and not roofing. A warning for when you google roof inspections, most of the first companies that come up are roofing installation companies. There is however one benefit to using an installation company you trust for this inspection, and that is the cost is usually less.

You should know that roofs usually leak around the areas with details (ridges, valleys, vents, chimneys, flashing, etc.). These areas may only need inexpensive repairs, which could give you several more trouble-free years.

On the other hand, the inspection may find severe leaking problems or conditions beyond repair that must be addressed immediately to prevent water damage or rotting roof and wall structures in your building.

The best way for you to make the right decision is for you to have the right information in the first place.

# CHAPTER 2

## How Do I Choose a Roofing Company?

Here are a few points to consider when choosing a roofing company.

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### 1. USE PROFESSIONALS

In the world of roofing, professionalism matters. If your new roof leaks, a couple of Chucks in a truck won't be around to honor their warranty in five to ten years.

It is important to remember that any roof, including yours, is a one-of-a-kind project with thousands of individual parts - the average 2,000-square-foot roof has some 3,300 shingles held in place by over 10,000 roofing nails. There are also several hundred other pieces, including underlay, flashing, and vents. It just takes one of these pieces to be installed incorrectly for a future leak.

So even if you purchase the best roofing materials in the world, a less-than-expert installation could ruin the job. An errant nail or two will eventually cause your roof to leak.

### 2. REVIEWS ARE USEFUL

Sorting through online reviews is an excellent first step to help you determine which company to contact. Every company gets a bad review now and then. But if a company has been in business for years and only has a few good reviews or a lot of scathing reviews, it's probably not the best choice.



The number of reviews is important. Anyone can get half a dozen 5-star reviews from their friends and family. It is also essential to know what the good reviews say. Do the reviews get into the specifics about what they liked about the company and who did a great job or are the reviews short one- sentence reviews without a lot of detail? Check for both the number and quality of the reviews.

### 3. ARE THEY COVERED BY WORKSAFE BC?

You may not be aware, but under WorkSafeBC legislation, you, as the property owner, are legally responsible for ensuring everyone working on your property is covered by WorkSafeBC. If the worker (whether a window cleaner, tree trimmer, drywaller, or roofer) does not have his coverage, it is up to you to take out coverage with WorkSafeBC for each worker. The roofing company you hire should be taking care of this.

Even if the company is registered with WorkSafeBC and has a WorkSafeBC number, the company may not be in good standing and may have a delinquent account. If this is the case, you as the building owner are not covered, and again, you become liable. Watch out; this indicates a fly-by-night company or a company that is not financially sound. So don't just take anyone's word that they are covered and in good standing. Always get a Clearance letter from WorkSafeBC to ensure any company working on your property is in good Standing.

For more information and to get a clearance letter from WorkSafeBC online, go to: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/insurance/why-clearance-letter/get-clearance-letter>



#### 4. DO THEY HAVE INSURANCE?

There is also the question of liability insurance. Check that your roofer has up-to-date insurance.



If you have a flat roof and they are using an open flame or any Hot Work roofing like Torch-On membrane, then you need to ensure they have Hot Work insurance. You will not be insured if they do not have Hot Work insurance, and many roofers do not have this insurance now because it is expensive and harder to qualify for.

It is not worth the risk of hiring a company without the proper insurance. If there is a massive leak or fire, they will not be there for you so get a copy of their insurance and make sure you are protected. Apply the old saying “If you prepare for the worst, it probably won't happen.”

#### 5. HOW WILL THEY PREVENT PROPERTY DAMAGE?

Roofing is hard, dirty work that takes place in a dangerous environment (on your roof). There are a lot of old materials to come off and new ones to go back on. It takes a lot of care and planning to control this environment so that no damage is done to your property or the neighbors.

If you are very close to the neighbor's, shingles can slide off and mark up the side of their home or yours. Flower beds can be trampled, bushes and shrubs can be crushed, and broken nails can be left on the lawn or driveway.

There are ways to protect your property with tarps and plywood barriers, and other protection. Every property will have a different approach depending on the roof pitch, access, and surroundings. If you have a flat roof and can park a disposal bin right against the house, you don't have to worry about this too much. Unfortunately, that is usually not the case.

This is a crucial point here: talk about it with your roofing contractor before you sign a contract and make sure you are comfortable; they have a good plan and have them put it in writing into the contract.

# CHAPTER 3

## What's the big deal about Warranties?

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What about warranties? The company you choose should offer a material warranty and a labor warranty.

The manufacturer of the roofing materials provides a warranty for the materials. Your chosen roofing contractor should understand and explain the warranty to you.

But let's go over the material warranty here. It explicitly covers defects or irregularities in the materials themselves. If these materials fail due to defects (not caused by external factors like storms or debris), the manufacturer typically takes one of two approaches:

**Supply New:** In this scenario, the manufacturer delivers new shingles directly to your home. However, you are responsible for installation. Having shingles dropped on your driveway doesn't entirely solve your issue.

**Pay-Out:** Instead of physically replacing the shingles, the manufacturer offers a monetary payment. Here's the catch: this payment is prorated over time. You only receive the total amount if the roof fails within the non-prorated period. The warranty only covers the roofing materials and not the installation costs.





## HERE ARE SOME OTHER MATERIAL WARRANTY CATCHES:

1. If the roof is improperly installed, the warranty is invalid.
2. Inadequate ventilation throughout the attic space can also void a warranty.
3. The warranty is invalid if the roof does not receive regular maintenance, which is not defined in the warranty.
4. Most manufacturers base their warranties on “water infiltration.” If the shingle falls apart but doesn’t lead to water leakage, the warranty doesn’t apply. The warranty only kicks in if a manufacturing defect causes the roof to leak. So, even if all the granules wash off the shingles or curl and fade, a valid warranty claim solely depends on the water getting into your home.

A professional roofing company can and will explain these things to you.

Then comes the workmanship warranty. Does the roofing company even have one? If so, do they automatically provide it in writing along with their quote, or do you need to request it specifically? Do they provide clarity on what’s covered and what is not?

It is essential to understand how long their workmanship warranty lasts. Would the roofing company return and complete any necessary repairs at no cost to you even eight years down the road? Assuming they’re still in business. Plenty of roofing contractors have only been in business for a couple of years, so it’s wise to find a company with a long history.

The truth is almost all roofing failures that occur in the first 10 years are from poor installation methods or bad workmanship, so your best protection is to focus on who is installing your roof and not the manufacturer of the product. Sadly, the roofers who do the shoddiest work are the ones who will likely not be around when a problem does occur.



# CHAPTER 4

## Choosing the Correct Roofing Material for Your Property.

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### Sloped Roofing

There are so many types of roofing materials to choose from. How do I know I getting the right ones for my roof?



If you have a roof with cedar shingles or ceramic tiles, you may want to consider changing to Fiberglass mat asphalt shingles, especially the premium, better-looking, heavy-duty ones. The cost of cedar has gone sky-high, and it doesn't last as long as asphalt or metal roofing. Cedar is beautiful though and still a valid choice for that reason. Concrete and clay tile roofs on the other hand do not do well in this climate and I would suggest staying away from them.

Asphalt shingles have been with us for over a century. During this time, the manufacturers have developed a formula that is both cost-effective and long-lasting. The exterior layer has a granulated surface. These granules protect the shingles' internal asphalt layers from the sun's harmful ultraviolet light, thus preventing quick and premature degradation, cracking, and aging. Additionally, the granules are critical to many asphalt shingles' architectural look, color, and style.

Various shingles, with differing weights, styles, and prices can be installed on your home. If installed properly standard shingles typically last around 20 - 25 years. Mid-weight shingles can reach up to 30 - 35 years, while heavy-weight shingles have a 40 - 50-year lifespan.

Improving or maintaining the roof's architectural style can be worth the additional investment to maintain the home's real estate value. A professional roofing contractor will work with you to find a shingle solution that fits your needs and budget.

Metal roofing systems are another valid option that is becoming a more popular option because they are extremely long-lasting, they don't need as much maintenance, and they look great for longer. The only downside is they are more expensive. Metal roofs are the best roofs for shedding snow.

## Flat Roofing

For flat roofing, there are half a dozen main choices of material. The two main categories are single-ply membranes and multiple-ply membranes. The multiple-ply membranes are the ones that are applied with an open flame and are called Torch on membranes. Single-ply membranes have their seams either glued together or fused together with a heat gun. To maintain clarity, the discussion will steer clear of extensive acronyms and complex scientific terminology, concentrating instead on the core details of the products.

There are times when Single-ply is the better option and times when multiple-ply is the better option. There are numerous factors to consider in making that decision. To get unbiased advice, you should consult someone who has experience with both options or seek an independent roof inspector. For our climate, the most effective single-ply membranes are PVC membranes, such as Duro-Last. They were originally developed as pool liners and perform very well in our wet climate.

Your flat roof should never be perfectly flat. A perfectly flat roof has a risk of standing water, making drains ineffective. Standing water can shorten the lifespan of the membrane and add excessive weight to the roof which creates sagging, creating more standing water. To prevent this issue, a Slope Package can be installed on the roof to create a more efficient way for water to be directed towards the drains. This will effectively mitigate standing water problems.



# CHAPTER 5

## The importance of Ventilation

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How does roof ventilation affect the life of my new roof? The lifespan of any shingle roof, no matter the shingle quality, also depends on proper roof ventilation and regular roof maintenance. Ventilation is critical.

The Roofing Contractors Association of BC (RCABC) says, “Attic ventilation is not the responsibility of the roofing contractor as it is a design and building code requirement.” Shingle manufacturers also say that without proper ventilation, their warranties become void.

The building code says that one square foot of ventilation needs to be installed for every 300 sqft of attic space. (1/300) 60% of the ventilation should be intake along the edge of the eaves or from the soffit, and 40% should be exhaust near the peak or along the ridge of your roof.

That all sounds simple enough, but unfortunately, achieving this is sometimes complicated by the age of the house and the type of internal construction. Your roofing contractor needs to be an expert in roof ventilation. Do they know the 1/300 ventilation ratio in the building code? Do they know the difference between the intake ventilation at the soffits and the exhaust at the ridge?

Most roofers will automatically put a couple of vents up at the ridge or suggest some other form of exhaust ventilation, but not many roofers consider the intake. The ventilation system will not work correctly without a balanced system and can even pull moisture into your attic.

If you have an older home with additional insulation blown into the attic, there is a good chance that the intake ventilation from the soffits will be restricted or blocked. This can be easily checked for and rectified.

Attic ventilation is a complex subject, especially when considering flat roofs, vaulted ceilings, and attic renovations. Still, you can be sure that if the estimator doesn't at least know about the 1/300 ventilation ratio and the need for balanced ventilation, they don't know enough about ventilation to design and install your roof.

# CHAPTER 6

## Things to watch Out for When Your New Roof is Installed.

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If a new roof is needed, precautions must be taken before the tear-off of your roof begins to prevent damage to your property.

Here are some steps you need to take with your roofing contractor before any work begins:

1. Go around your property with your choice of roofing contractor and point out the areas you want to protect. Have them propose a solution to protect these areas and then ensure the solution is written into the contract.
2. Ask if the company will pay for restoration if they don't provide adequate protection, which results in some damage. Getting details like this in writing increases the chance that the protection instructions will be passed on to the installer who does the work.
3. The crew needs a magnetic roller to pick up loose nails. It is the 2nd best way to remove nails from grass or gravel. The best way is to cover the areas so there are no nails in the first place, but it is unrealistic to assume there will be no errant nails so ensure they have a magnetic roller.
4. Find out how they will keep the water out of your house if it rains during the job. Several things can be done to minimize this risk to almost zero.
  - (a) First, the crew must be big enough to quickly remove the old roof and promptly install the new one. If the roof is too big to be completed in one day, even with a larger crew, then have them do it one section at a time.
  - (b) Secondly, your contractor must agree to always **INSTALL UNDERLAY** and tarp unfinished roof sections at the end of every day. Never leave a roof open overnight, no matter the forecast, and never let the installer on the job talk you into leaving it exposed overnight. It only takes an hour of rain in the middle of the night to warp your hardwood floors, ruin your cabinets, stain your carpet, wreck your furniture, or peel the paint off your walls.
  - (c) Lastly, ensure the contractor always has adequate new tarps on the job should the weather change during the day.





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How long will it take? This depends on the size of the roof, its complexity, and the size of the installation crew.

The longer the project takes, the more noise, mess, commotion, and general disruption there will be around your home and the greater the potential for water damage if it rains.

Doing the work properly takes a set number of working hours you don't want to shortcut.

Increasing the crew size is the only way to reduce the time. Ask, "How big is your crew? How many people will show up each day? Will you work every day until the project is complete?"

Once the roof is completed, a qualified roofer must inspect it.

Even the best roofers will make mistakes. Expect that minor deficiencies will need to be found and corrected on your roof after it is installed. There's always some non-optimum situation, like an exposed nail head, a loose shingle, or debris in the gutters. These common issues may be found even after a good installer has done his job.

The important thing is that the roofing company has a standard system for finding and correcting those deficiencies. But it can't be someone from the installation team just who wants to finish and get off that roof after a long, hot day. It is worth noting that the quality of installers' work increases substantially when they know that all their roofs will be inspected by someone other than themselves.

So, the inspection needs to be done by a roofing professional with fresh eyes to see what needs correction. This can be someone from the same company (if it is a reputable company) or an independent roofing inspector familiar with RCABC standards.



They must thoroughly inspect everything from the last shingle on the roof ridge to the nails being picked up from the driveway. Depending on the size or complexity of the job, the time taken to correct it may only be a few minutes to an hour. But it must be done.

Remember, a roof is constructed with over 15,000 parts. It's a manufacturing process that requires a quality control procedure. Ensure that the contractor you're selecting has this mindset and puts quality control at the top of their list of priorities.

Only then is the job complete and you can relax.

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### Ready to Protect Your Home with Confidence?

Now that you have some knowledge about roofing, and how to approach hiring a contractor, I hope you have enough confidence to ask lots of questions. Take the approach that you can understand all you need to know about roofing to successfully manage your roofing project if the roofers you are working with know their stuff well enough to explain it in layman's terms. Don't let them use roofing terms without defining them or use acronyms that mean nothing to you. Get them to show you samples of the different materials.

If you need our help, the roofing professionals at Absolute Roof Solutions can guide you through each step, ensuring you make the best-informed choices for your property. Whether you're considering an inspection, need repairs, or contemplating a completely new roof, we're your trusted partner in achieving long-lasting, beautiful, and functional roofing solutions.

Don't take chances with your roof. Get educated!



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