

Selecting a Competent Roofing Contractor

Introduction

1. It is essential that anyone wishing to have roof work carried out ensures that the company, or persons, selected to undertake the work (hereafter referred to as 'contractors') are competent to do so. In many cases, this is a legal requirement.
2. Contractors undertaking work must meet three basic criteria. They should:
 - be capable of providing a high quality service;
 - ensure that work is carried out in accordance with current British or other accredited industry Standards;
 - be able to carry out the work in a safe manner.
3. In checking the competence of a contractor the following should, as appropriate, be considered:

Commercial Probity

4. Are they creditworthy? Do they carry employers and public liability insurance?
 - Are their terms and conditions clear?
 - Is the price clear and unambiguous? Have you agreed a brief and/or scope of works?

Experience

5. What is their past experience, track record and industry awareness?
 - Sufficient experience and current job knowledge, in the specified activity, should be supported by relevant training (demonstrated when requested by qualification or accreditation).
 - A competent contractor should be able to provide evidence of this, at both management and craft levels. Experience is a major factor; however, experience based on poor or inadequate initial training is often worthless. Experience and knowledge must, therefore, be supportable by documented evidence.

Trade Organisation

6. Is the contractor a member of a reputable and appropriate trade organisation?
 - A company should preferably be registered by a reputable trade organisation that has a code of practice and complaints procedure, e.g. the National Federation of Roofing Contractors (NFRC), the Flat Roofing Alliance (FRA), the Single Ply Roofing Association (SPRA) and the Mastic Asphalt Council (MAC), Rural & Industrial Design and Building Association (RIDBA).
 - Some organisations provide guarantees by checking stringently, through the inspection of completed work and company procedures, the credentials of contractors, e.g. 'Roofsafe plus'; 'co partnership scheme' (NFRC), etc.
 - The government also operates the 'Trustmark' scheme for domestic work.
 - Alternatively, depending on the type of work involved, written references from bona-fide customers, and examples of completed or ongoing projects, might be sufficient.

The Advisory Committee for Roofwork is a body dedicated to making working on roofs safer. It was established in 1998 and is made up of nominees from the following associations who provide the experience of many years of involvement in working on roofs in the advice given in their documents:

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Personnel

7. Is the contractor a member of a training scheme and register for operatives, and/or a trade association?
 - Company owners and senior managers may be able to demonstrate their competence in roofing by providing, for example, evidence of Membership of the Institute of Roofing (IoR). Alternatively, they may possess management or supervisory level qualifications through the Construction Skills Certificate Scheme (CSCS) and/or a relevant S/NVQ.
 - Craft or trade personnel should, as a minimum, possess current and relevant CSCS cards, or equivalent. These will indicate that they have a good knowledge of the trade specified on the card and have passed a basic health and safety test, or an S/NVQ or City and Guilds qualification.
8. Is design, construction, maintenance and repair work planned, managed and undertaken by appropriately qualified and experienced personnel, e.g. engineers and managers with sufficient professional or technical training, knowledge and practical experience (including management and planning for safe systems of work)?
 - Details of responsible persons' or safety advisors' qualifications should also be requested. Examples of safe working systems, risk assessments and method statements may also provide an insight into the competency of potential contractors.

Health and Safety

9. Do they have, implement and review policies and procedures for establishing 'safe systems of work' (including the process of hazard identification, risk assessment, risk avoidance and the control of remaining residual risks)?
 - Information regarding competence in respect of health and safety should be requested, such as a current health and safety policy and records.
10. Are there appropriate levels of site supervision by those with practical experience and training; and is their skill level maintained?
 - Details of responsible persons or safety advisors qualifications should also be requested. Examples of safe working systems, method statements and risk assessments may also provide an insight into the competency of potential contractors.

Methods of work

11. Are there procurement methods that ensure the adequate allocation of resources, including time, money, plant and equipment?
 - Management and work systems should be subject to quality and safety audits. The contractor should, where appropriate, have procedures to ensure adequate design, checking (including conceptual errors) and change control. The contractor may require a range of equipment and techniques, particularly where new and unfamiliar technologies are used.

NOTE

Every care and attention was taken to ensure the accuracy of the information included in this document, however the committee or any individual committee members can not accept responsibility for any errors or omissions contained therein.

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BCSA · CTMA · EPIC · FASET · FCMA · FRA · HSE · MCRMA · NARM · NFRC · RIDBA · SPRA