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## Hiring a Professional roofer: When it comes to Roofing, You Need a Pro on Top

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A rooftop is no place for amateurs, yet each year many homeowners – and even strata corporations – risk money, comfort and safety when installing or replacing roofs on their property.

The results of hiring the wrong roofing crew can be tragic: leaks, falls, liability claims, toothless warranties and improper installations that are costly to repair. Modern roofs are demanding and technologically advanced projects with higher-performance materials and techniques continually being introduced, all of which require professional installers with up-to-the minute knowledge.

Contemporary construction also requires sophisticated insurance coverage.

Last year, falls from roofs accounted for nearly 30 per cent of all claims to WorkSafeBC, according to the BC Construction Safety Alliance. If an injured worker's employer does not have proper worker compensation insurance, the liability costs for a property owner can be crippling.

It is easy for a property owner to be confused, since they may only hire roofing contractors once or twice in their lifetime. Promises of cut-rate prices, fast labour and even no taxes can be tempting. But in a province with the most expensive homes in the country, cutting corners on a roofing contract can mean financial disaster. Yet many still risk it.

The Roofing Contractors Association of BC (RCABC) set the standard for professional roofing, established the RoofStar Guarantee, considered North America's top

guarantee for roofing materials and workmanship, and has graduated scores of roofing apprentices.

Established in 1960, the RoofStar Guarantee remains the first and only roofing industry guarantee program that is backed by both the roofing contractor and RCABC. Now required for 80 per cent of the largest BC commercial and government construction projects and growing in the multi-family, strata sector as property values have risen. For this reason the RoofStar Guarantee is also more widely requested in new multi-family strata construction.

RCABC offers many advantages to multi-family strata owners and managers in British Columbia as outlined below:

### **RCABC pre-qualifies roofing contractors and all members must:**

- Carry a minimum of \$5 million in liability insurance and have a workplace safety program in place
- Have mandatory safety certification (COR) from the BC Construction Safety Alliance
- Adhere to the RCABC Roofing Practice Manual, recognized and relied upon throughout BC and Canada
- Use quality, pre-qualified roofing materials, known to perform in our environment
- Must have Red Seal journey persons and apprentices
- Operate reputable businesses with experienced management teams
- Uphold RCABC policies regarding ethics and professionalism

### **RCABC RoofStar Guarantee and Risk Mitigation**

Risk management of all roofing projects lies at the heart of the RoofStar Guarantee Program. A roof installed to RCABC guarantee standards mitigates risk from fire, water, wind damage and worker injury because of the guarantee program's rigorous attention to roofer training, material selection, time-tested standards, corporate safety and independent inspections. The data speaks for itself. A recent study conducted by RDH Building Engineering Ltd. found that roofs completed with a risk managed approach manifest fewer warrantable problems than roofs completed under any other warranty program. The study indicates that the presence of an RCABC 10-year RoofStar Guarantee reduces the chances of warrantable roofing issues by approximately 42%.

### **Preventative roof maintenance extends roof life and value**

Taking good care of your roof can extend its lifespan by 25 to 30 per cent, experts say. And now there are innovative techniques and technology – including infrared scanners, smartphones, secured data storage and retrieval – to make maintenance easier and more cost effective.

RCABC members involved with roof maintenance know building codes, energy solutions, are familiar with all nine major roofing systems and the more than 60 subsets, and are trained in safety.

The pay-off for professional, proactive roof maintenance is impressive. The most common older roof systems can last decades if properly cared for; saving capital budgets for other high value projects.

An RCABC professional roofing contractor can provide strata and multi-family buildings a comprehensive maintenance package with roof inspections at least every six months, and more often during inclement weather conditions. As a reference guide, RCABC has developed and published an extensive *Roof*

*Maintenance Guide* <http://www.rcabc.org/wp-content/uploads/Roof-Maintenance-Guide-2012.pdf>

Today's professional roof maintenance companies are also armed with high-tech tools to keep clients in the loop. Using smart phones linked to secure online storage, the crews photograph any roof problems and track repairs as they are being done.

### **Tips on roof maintenance**

How can you ensure that the roof over your head is maintained, inspected and performing as it should?

- Contact the Roofing Contractors Association of British Columbia. We can listen, discuss and direct you to a reputable company or resource to get answers and an action plan.
- Have roof inspections and maintenance done every six months, more often during inclement weather.
- Specify RCABC approved and time tested materials.
- Keep a maintenance record of the roof system including guarantee documents and contracts.