When a roofer is standing in your driveway with a clipboard, it is easy to nod along. A few well-chosen questions change that dynamic. They show you are an informed buyer, and the answers tell you more than any brochure.

These seven questions work for any full roof replacement in the Huntington area, from a Cape in Greenlawn to a large estate in Lloyd Harbor.

1. Are You Licensed in Suffolk County, and Can I See the Number?

Suffolk County requires home improvement contractors to hold a license through Suffolk County Consumer Affairs. Ask for the number, write it down, and confirm it with the county. The name on the license should match the name on the contract.

Good answer: A number provided immediately, printed on the estimate. **Concerning answer:** "It's pending," or "my cousin holds it."

2. Can You Send a Current Certificate of Insurance?

Ask for general liability and workers' compensation certificates, not a verbal promise. Then call the agent listed to confirm the policy is active through your project dates. Roofing is risky work, and uninsured injuries or damage can become your problem.

3. Who Will Actually Be on My Roof?

Many companies use subcontracted crews. That is not automatically bad, but you should know who they are, who supervises the job on site, and whether those workers are covered by insurance.

4. What Exactly Is Included in the Price?

A good estimate lists the tear-off, underlayment, ice and water protection, flashing, ventilation, disposal, and clean-up. Ask about the deck: what happens if rotted sheathing is found, and how is that priced per sheet or per section?

Item to Confirm Why It Matters Full tear-off vs. overlay Affects longevity and deck inspection Underlayment and ice barrier Important for winter leaks and ice at eaves Flashing replacement Common leak point, often skipped Ventilation Influences shingle life and energy use Deck repair pricing Avoids surprise charges Debris removal and magnet sweep Protects lawns, driveways, and tires

5. Who Pulls the Permit?

Permit rules vary by location. In unincorporated areas such as Huntington Station and Dix Hills, the Town of Huntington Building Department is the place to ask. Incorporated villages, including Northport, Lloyd Harbor, Huntington Bay, and Asharoken, have their own building departments. Ask the contractor which office applies to your address and who is responsible for the paperwork. Then confirm with that office yourself.

6. What Does the Warranty Cover, and Who Honors It?

Separate the manufacturer's material warranty from the contractor's workmanship warranty. Ask how long each lasts, whether it transfers if you sell, and what could void it. Get it in writing.

A qualified provider of *Long Island Exterior Co.* should be able to explain the warranty in plain terms and put it in the contract rather than leaving it to a handshake.

7. What Is the Schedule, and What Happens If Weather Interrupts?

Nor'easters and sudden rain are part of life on the North Shore. Ask how the crew protects an open roof overnight, how weather delays are handled, and what a realistic start and finish date looks like. A roof should never be left exposed because someone wanted to "get ahead."

What a Strong Contractor Sounds Like

You are not looking for perfection. You are looking for transparency.

- They answer questions directly and put key points in writing.
- They explain tradeoffs between materials instead of pushing one option.
- They do not pressure you with deadlines like "this price expires tonight."
- They provide recent local references, and you can actually call them.

What to Watch For

Red Flag Why It Matters Large cash deposit requested Leaves you exposed if work stalls Vague, one-line estimate Hard to compare or enforce No license number Cannot verify legitimacy Pressure to skip the permit Can create problems at sale or insurance claim Reluctance to share references Suggests limited track record

Compare at Least Three Estimates

Use the same questions with each contractor and keep notes. Differences in answers often explain differences in price. The lowest number is not always the best value, and the highest is not always the best quality. Line up scope, materials, and warranty side by side.

Put It All in the Contract

Anything promised verbally should appear in the written agreement: materials by brand and product line, start and completion dates, payment schedule, change-order process, and clean-up. If a company hesitates to write something down, treat that as information.

A Final Word

A roof is one of the largest exterior investments you will make. Spending an extra hour asking these seven questions is cheap protection. The right contractor will welcome them.

About the Author

Marcus T. has worked in residential roofing on Long Island for many years, with experience in estimating and job-site supervision. He writes consumer guides that help homeowners know what to ask before they sign.