

Roofs, Leaks & The Building Envelope

A Practical Guide For Valley Homeowners Contemplating A Roofing project...

- 8 Questions To Ask Your Roofing Contractor and 1 You Should NOT Ask
- 7 Items Your Roofing Contractor Should Provide You
- Common Mistakes Made In Hiring A Roofing Contractor

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Dear Home or Building Owner,

Congratulations! You have in your hands a tool that has helped many home or building owners make a great decision on who to use for their roofing needs. The information in this guide is a part of our ongoing efforts to educate consumers about roofing and roofing contractors.

The information you will find in this guide originally came about as a result of being a host of my radio show HouseTalk. HouseTalk was a live, interactive, home improvement show which aired from January, 2001 through March, 2014 every Saturday in the Phoenix Valley. During the years of hosting HouseTalk I fielded numerous calls from listeners who requested help in trying to handle some unpleasant situations that occurred while they were in the middle of a home improvement project. Some of these situations have included roofing. Because of this I was driven to try to compile some common sense information that would help consumers avoid getting into those types of situations in the first place.

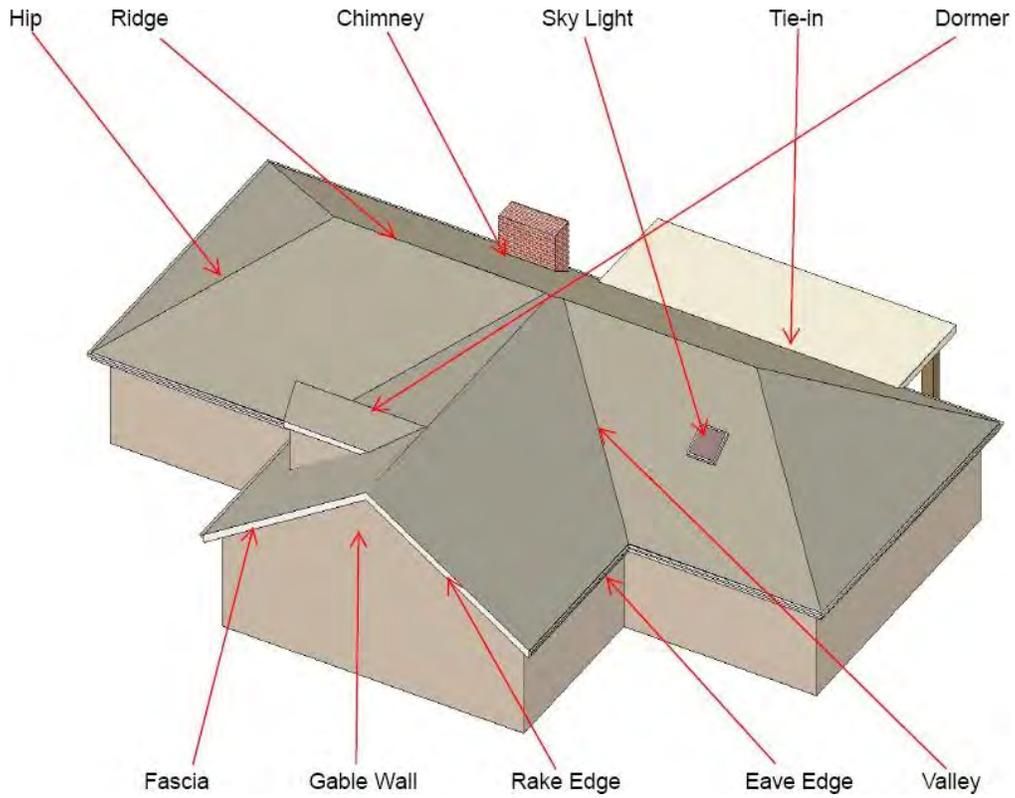
We want to try and help make your buying decision as easy as possible and hope the information you find inside will help make you a more confident, knowledgeable consumer.

Sincerely,

Warren Raisanen
President
Trades Unlimited

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Warren Raisanen'.

Basic Parts Of A Roof



Head wall



Dead Valley

Questions To Ask:

How Long Have You Been In Business? We all need to start somewhere. A good statistic to remember is that the majority of roofing/construction companies do not last for 5 years.

Trades Unlimited was started as a sole proprietorship in 1994 and incorporated in 1998.

How Many Roofs Like Mine Has Your Company Installed? This helps to determine experience with projects like yours.

As of this writing in March 2019 Trades Unlimited has installed 5514 roofs.

The approximate breakdown is: 2595 Foam roofs, 1422 Tile roofs, 867 Shingle roofs and the balance are repairs or other roof types.

Are My Leaks Coming From The Roof? Many leaks are NOT from the roof. Some are coming from flashings at windows, chimney caps and so on. If the estimator or rep is confused with this question you should probably keep looking.

At Trades Unlimited we understand how all the parts of a building work together and our estimator had BETTER be able to tell you where your leaks are coming from... if they cannot please call us!

Do You and Your Company Understand the Building Envelope? Many, many leaks occur because of a misunderstanding about how the different parts and pieces of a building need to work together. If they do not work together leaks are often the result. If the person or company proposing to do your roofing work does NOT understand the building envelope then they cannot understand how to prevent leaks in many situations.

At Trades Unlimited we specialize in the Building Envelope and finding leaks nobody else can. This makes us THE EXPERTS on how to make certain YOUR roof does NOT LEAK when we are done with it. Go to TradesUnlimitedRoofing.com and watch the videos to learn more about the Building Envelope and how it pertains to leaks.

Does Your Company Use Subcontractors? Most companies do end up using subcontractors on occasion. As a rule, installers should be employees of the company to insure that a consistent standard is maintained for quality.

Trades Unlimited subcontracts most of it's tearoffs (removal of the old roof) and maintains it's own employees for the actual installation of your new roof.

How Are Your Roofing Projects Managed? This part takes into consideration material ordering, scheduling and coordination of your project. Good foremen and superintendents (production managers) are critical to making a job go smoothly.

Trades Unlimited's foremen and superintendents are all journeymen tradesmen. This insures that they understand what it takes to perform a quality roofing job.

What Steps Does Your Company Take For Quality Control? It is very easy for a company to say they do great work. What systems do they have in place to insure that?

Trades Unlimited's Sales Representatives are experienced roofing experts who can analyze your project expertly and accurately, come up with a good SOLUTION and specify that. If they get stuck they call on others on the Trades Unlimited team for help. Photos are taken of your project, instructions are written, cover sheets filled out, etc. If your project is unusual it is inspected by a Trades Unlimited superintendent before the work starts. Depending on the complexity of the job, and the foreman assigned to it the superintendent may stop by your job several times or just to perform a final inspection. Our Superintendents are always available to you via their cell phones. The superintendent also performs a final inspection after the work is completed.

Has Your Company Ever Been Recognized In Your Industry? Very few companies can answer "yes" to this question. The ones that can tend to have more credentials than most and those additional credentials should give you more piece of mind.

Trades Unlimited has been named the Arizona GAF Certified Contractor of the Year for Residential Roofing and has also received GAF's Master Elite Excellence Award for multiple PERFECT installations.

The Question NOT to Ask: How Should My Roof Be Ventilated?

This question (or lack of reference to it) pertains mostly to shingle roofs and tile roofs. Flat roofs that are being foamed are not a concern. So... why NOT ask about ventilation? Because, if the sales representative/estimator does NOT bring it up then they need to go study their craft a little better. Each and every manufacturer recommends or requires adequate ventilation for their products to last as long as they should. When possible, manufacturers recommend passive soffit to ridge ventilation which is sometimes difficult to achieve.

If your Trades Unlimited representative does not speak to you about ventilation, especially for your shingle roof, we want to hear from you!

7 Important Items

A Qualified Roofing Contractor Should Provide

1. **Current Business License:** Make sure they have the appropriate licenses if required by law in your area.

The Trades Unlimited License No. for Roofing is: ROC146542, K-42

2. **Better Business Bureau Membership:** Check to see if the company is a member and how they have handled complaints that have been filed against them.

Trades Unlimited has been a member of the Better Business Bureau since 1999

3. **Trade Association Certificates of Standing:** Trade Association membership implies some quality and ethical integrity by the contractor. Associations such as National Roofing Contractors Association (NRCA) and Arizona Roofing Contractors Association (ARCA) require professional and quality standards.

Trades Unlimited has been a member in good standing with ARCA for several years

4. **Current References:** Contractors should be able to provide a good list of references. Use common sense; it is highly unlikely that you will be provided references that are negative about the company you are considering.

Trades Unlimited can provide, upon request, hundreds of references.

5. **Written Documents That Clearly Define The Following:** Detailed written proposals that include: Scope of work being done, as well as work NOT being done, product selections as well as a straight forward payment schedule.

Trades Unlimited will provide all of the above in writing, before the work is started.

6. **Workman's Compensation Insurance:** Your contractor must carry Workman's Compensation Insurance for all workers in case of injury. If your contractor does not carry Workman's Compensation Insurance and someone is injured on your property, then the contractor would be personally liable. If they cannot cover the damages, you will have no legal recourse and you may end up paying for any medical care or disability.

Trades Unlimited's Workman's Compensation Insurance is currently held through Consolidated Personnel Services. Phone: 602-230-8940.

7. General Liability Insurance: Not “Self Insured” It is NOT against the law for your contractor to not carry liability insurance, however, the exposure and potential for property damage is enormous, and your contractor should have general liability insurance coverage for at least 1 million dollars. If your contractor’s insurance policy cannot cover potential damages, then the contractor would be personally liable. If he/she cannot cover the damages, you will have no legal recourse and you will end up paying for the repairs. The type of damage is sometimes excluded from your homeowner’s policy.

Trades Unlimited currently carries General Liability Insurance through
Farmer – Leavitt Insurance Agency. Phone: 602-264-0566

Common Mistakes Made By Home Or Building Owners When Hiring a Roofing Contractor

- **Buying Roofing the Same as a “Name Brand” Item:** You need a pair of Levis so you call the different stores that sell the particular type you are looking for and compare their prices... cheapest one wins! You save money for the EXACT same item just by purchasing it from a different store. That is simply being a smart consumer. The problem comes in when you try to buy something like a new roof based only upon price. It is not even CLOSE to the same situation as purchasing an identical item from the establishment that is offering the best price. YOUR ROOF IS MANUFACTURED ON-SITE! What I mean is it makes absolutely no difference whatsoever the quality of the materials used if the installation crew is not proficient at performing a quality installation of those materials.

Trades Unlimited has replaced hundreds and perhaps over a THOUSAND roofs that failed prematurely. Many of those roofs were installed by the “low bidder”.

We look at roofs EVERY SINGLE DAY that did not have the best installation practices used. You are so much better off establishing who is offering you the best VALUE! If you choose Trades Unlimited to perform your roofing installation you will receive the absolute best value for your roofing dollar possible.

- **Roofing Contractor Does Not Know How to Stop Your Leaks:** This “mistake” is much harder to avoid. The company involved really wants to do a good job, they simply do not know how to solve your problem. The resulting frustration and anguish with this situation can get to be very intense. The questions regarding where your leaks are coming from and about the *Building Envelope* should help you avoid getting into this difficult situation.

Trades Unlimited has replaced or repaired roofs after many leading roofing companies have given up or just have not been able to solve the problems even with their best efforts. We are the LEADER in understanding and dealing with the Building Envelope and have made videos that document these issues and routinely solved these problems for years.

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- **Buying a New Roof and Finding Out the Leak is NOT From the ROOF!** This mistake cannot be avoided 100% of the time but if your roofer understands the Building Envelope and how all the parts and pieces of a building work together it is very rare for this to happen. Again, use the questions regarding leaks and the building envelope.

Trades Unlimited routinely diagnoses leaks that are NOT from roofs and provides a permanent solution for those types of leaks.

- **Convincing a Roofer To Perform a Repair When You Really Need a New Roof:** This is common and very understandable when you have leaks and a shortage of funds.

You are going to run into situations where you really, really want a repair to be the solution and end up finding a roofer that needs work/money badly enough that he ends up performing that repair for you. Next rain, the leaks are back and you are angry at “that roofer that performed the shoddy work”. In these cases LISTEN to the roofers that are knowledgeable and have good credentials that tell you it is not repairable.

At Trades Unlimited we will tell you the truth even if you really do not want to hear it.

Even Roofs Have Enemies

A roofing system's performance is influenced by many factors. Knowing the following will help you make an informed buying decision

Flat Polyurethane Foam Roofs:

- **Drainage:** If the existing drainage on your roof leaves large ponds on it after a rain, this must be addressed before the new roof is installed. If it is not addressed the weight alone from a large amount of standing water will often cause structural damage to your building. Small ponds on flat roofs are normal and acceptable, large ones are not.
- **Scuppers:** These are the objects that protrude through your parapet walls and your water runs through to get off the roof. Scuppers that are not sized properly or that are detailed incorrectly are very common causes of roof leaks.
- **Tie-In Areas:** These are the areas where a flat and a pitched roof meet. This junction is a very common leak area. If only the flat portion of your roof is being done, a proper tie-in at the junction of your flat and pitched roof is critical to prevent leaks. In order for a proper tie-in to be performed, the flat roofing material must extend up the slope and under the pitched roofing material about 12 to 18 inches.
- **Roof to Wall Transitions:** This is one of the most common areas where leaks can actually be CREATED by the roofer. In the case of a framed building with stucco, while installing a foam roof, there are very specific ways in which wall to roof transitions must be performed. Go to TradesUnlimitedRoofing.com and watch the videos to learn more about this.

Tile Roofs

- **Underlayment:** This is roofing material that is under your tile. Your underlayment is what actually keeps your roof from leaking. Yes, water does go under your tile and if the underlayment has any voids in it your roof will leak. The standard underlayment used is not very heavy. If your roof needs to have new underlayment installed, you should get the best that you can afford.
- **Cracked or Missing Tile:** If you have tile that is broken or missing, the sun will very quickly deteriorate the underlayment material located under that tile. When this happens, you will start to experience leaks.
- **Improper Edge Detail:** Do you have any fascia (the perimeter boards at the edge of your roof) that is rotting? Usually this occurs because of improper edge detail on your tile roof.

Shingle Roofs

- **Missing or Torn Shingles:** Your roof is as good as its weakest link. If you do not have complete protection your structure as well as the buildings interior becomes vulnerable to leaks, which will lead to deterioration and rot.
- **Lack of Proper Ventilation:** The life of your shingle roof is drastically reduced if proper ventilation is lacking. You should have passive soffit to ridge ventilation.
- **Improper Edge Detail:** This is pretty much the same as with tile roofs. See above.

Roofs In General

- **Sun:** Our Arizona sun is your roof's worst enemy. Its intense heat and ultraviolet rays cause any roof to dry out and deteriorate over time. Foam roofs need maintenance coating every 5 to 7 years to keep them protected from the sun. Shingle and tile roofs need proper ventilation to cut down on the heat build up in the attic and prolong the life of the roofing material.
- **Rain:** When water gets under roofing materials, it can work its way to the roof deck and cause rotting of both the roof structure and the interior walls.
- **Wind:** High winds can lift up the edges of your roofing material and force water and debris under them. Extremely high winds can cause extensive damage. Foam roofs installed over an existing roofing system on a building without parapet walls should always have some foam to plywood contact at the edges. To accomplish this, the perimeter edges should be torn off if the roof does not have parapet walls. Scuppers should always be torn off around them and securely fastened before the foam roof is installed.
- **Flashing Deterioration:** Many apparent roof leaks are actually flashing leaks. If the flashing around chimneys, vents, skylights and wall/roof junctions are not tight, water will enter the home and cause damage. Flashings should be checked as part of your roofing inspection.

Warranties

Generalities About Roofing Warranties: Make sure that the warranties offered are transferable to a new owner. The average time a person owns a home is less than 10 years. With the importance of home inspections when selling your home, the warranty coverage can be very important. Obviously, if the company that issues the warranty goes out of business, that warranty becomes worthless, so be sure to choose a company you feel confident in. Always read warranties for complete details and restrictions.

Foam Roof Warranties: These should be dependent on the amount of foam and coating used when the roof is installed. In most cases foam roofs are installed with two coats of elastomeric roof coating. Think of the coating as sun block for the foam. If the company issuing the warranty gives terms of more than five years, be sure to ask about maintenance because that roof will require recoating in less than ten years and should be recoated in five years, unless more coating is used. If the roof is not recoated in a timely fashion it will deteriorate and burn the foam when it becomes exposed. In Arizona the standard thickness of the foam for residential applications is one inch. While this has performed well, additional structural integrity and strength can be achieved, by installing more than one inch of foam. Trades Unlimited offers various warranties for foam roofs, depending on the thickness of the foam installed and the amount of coating applied.

Shingle Warranties: Standard shingle manufacturer warranties begin to prorate after five years. The standard shingle manufacturer's warranty is a gauge to use to determine the quality of the shingles. Most workmanship (installation error) warranties are issued by the company that installs the roof.

Tile Warranties: One of the most common misconceptions about tile roofs is that a Tile Roof is a "Lifetime" roof. While it is indeed true that the tile itself may last a lifetime, the materials under the tile, the flashing around penetrations, and the transition areas, are the main factors involved when it comes to keeping your tile roof free from leaks. If underlayment materials, flashings and penetrations fail or deteriorate, your "Lifetime" roof will leak. Trades Unlimited has warranties available for tile roofs that range from five to fifteen years.

A Little Background on Trades Unlimited

In the mid 90's more and more valley home owners expressed an interest in having one company handle all of their home improvement needs. Based upon this concept and acting upon this need, Trades Unlimited was founded in 1994. Now a recognized name in the home improvement sector, Trades Unlimited has grown into a company that serves as a leader in roofing and window replacements. As we have grown there has always been a commitment to provide education to home and building owners which has helped us keep our skills sharp and stay on the leading edge. We want to be the company that you depend on for your home and building improvement needs.

Trades Unlimited Vision Statement

Our vision is to be one of the best performing and most sought after roofing companies in Arizona.

Trades Unlimited Mission Statement

To be a value driven, ethical provider of solutions-based home improvement services.

Trades Unlimited Value Statements

- We keep our commitments.
- We do not ask, nor do we expect our fellow employees or vendors to do anything that we will not ask or expect of ourselves.
- We strive to make the jobs and lives of our customers and fellow employees easier and better with our initial efforts.
- We always strive for solutions to customer problems.

To learn more about Trades Unlimited, visit our website: www.tradesunlimited.com. Please call our offices at **480-483-1775** and let us be of assistance to you with any of your home improvement needs.