

Department of Consumer Protection

Tips on Roof Clearing

Here are some guidelines to consider when hiring someone to clear snow from the roof of your home.

- Don't hire contractors who go door-to-door, who call, who post notices on bulletin boards, utility poles, or online before you check them out thoroughly. Get references and call them. Get written estimates before you hire someone.
- While a home improvement registration is not required to remove snow from a roof, it is a good idea to have a reputable registered home improvement contractor who specializes in roofing in order to evaluate the situation, and whose workers are experienced with roof work.
- Even if the need to clear the roof is urgent, put together a simple contract. A single sheet of paper on which the contractor writes out what he is going to do and when and at what price is enough. Both you and the contractor should sign the sheet. You don't want the price to go up once the contractor is on the roof.
- Depending upon the nature of the roof, the homeowner should also specify in writing whether it is only the roof that is to be cleared, or whether ice needs to be removed from gutters as well. With eventual melting, gutters have to be functioning or water could flow into homes and cause damage, so while workers are on the roof, this may be something to have done as well.
- Insurance coverage is another essential part of hiring a contractor. Make sure your contractor is insured to do roof work before the work starts, in case someone falls and gets hurt. The company or individual performing the work should carry their own liability insurance and must be able to produce an insurance certificate as proof. The certificate should carry the name of the insurance company, and you are urged to call the insurance agency on the certificate to confirm that coverage. If a company is having employees doing the snow removal work, the company should provide evidence that they have worker's compensation insurance, which the employer is required to carry.
- To verify if an insurance agent or agency is licensed in Connecticut, please visit the Connecticut Insurance Department web page at <http://www.cidverifylicense.ct.gov/CLIC/VerifyLicense.aspx>
- Prices for roof clearing may vary depending upon the nature of the roof. However, there should be a reasonable basis between the size of the roof, the time involved in removing the snow, and a comparable, ascertainable hourly rate – such as that for home improvement work – that would normally be charged for similar labor under normal circumstances. Every situation will be different, but the test of whether price gouging occurs will be whether the contractor can justify the price using an objective standard.
- Anyone removing snow from a roof, homeowner or contractor, should be extremely careful of any kind of above-ground wiring and keep all tools away from power lines.
- Reports of suspected price gouging should be sent to the Department of Consumer Protection at dcp.frauds@ct.gov. All such reports will be investigated and pursued as needed.
- The Department of Consumer Protection hotline is a toll-free number open during weekday business hours: 800-842-2649.