“CAN WE TALK”

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The roofing company that replaced my roof after it was damaged by hail is threatening to put a lien on my house since they say the roof is complete. The roof hasn’t been inspected yet, so how can I be sure the work meets the building code before I pay them the remainder of the agreed price?

Reminder: This information doesn’t just apply to a new roof, but to any and all work you have performed on your house.

Until the roof passes a final inspection the roof is not done, period. With all of the roofs damaged this summer by hail the number of roofs being replaced could amount to four times a normal year of roof permits. Currently, we have about 2,500 roof inspection requests. We have added four inspectors in the last month just to do roof inspections. With so many inspection requests it could take four to five weeks for your roof to be inspected. While we understand the frustration the roofing contractors are feeling, we would still not recommend paying in full until the roof passes a final inspection. I would suggest holding back 10% to 20% of the final payment until the inspection has been completed. The reason I suggest this although there are some great roofing contractors out there, we are still dealing with numerous roofing contractors that descended upon Colorado Springs after the hail storm of 2010 (there we 23,000 reroof permits from that storm), and who have shown up again to chase this storm, who still have many roofs from the 2010 storm that failed their inspection. We won’t renew their licenses until these two year old roofs are corrected, re-inspected and pass. The owners in most cases aren’t even aware their roof never passed inspection. I can almost guarantee that if final payment had not been received these roofs would have been corrected and passed inspection two years ago.
Always remember that you are the boss and a contractor should never threaten you. Holding back a percentage of payment until the work passes a final inspection is standard practice in the construction industry. If the threats continue call the police and file a report. If the contractor disappears and doesn’t follow through, the 20% of the job amount you held back will hopefully be sufficient to have any corrections made so that your roof will be able to pass inspection.

**My apartment is unsafe, can you come out and inspect it and make the landlord make the corrections?**

For some reason I have received many of these type of requests this summer. We, at the Regional Building Department, do not have the authority to enforce the Housing Maintenance Codes. If you live in the city limits you should contact Code Enforcement with your request. Code Enforcement is a division of the Police Department that enforces the housing maintenance codes (among many other City codes). If you live in the County you may have a harder time since El Paso County Code officers enforce land use issues but do not enforce the housing maintenance codes. The State legislature passed an ordinance a few years ago to help with tenant landlord issues. I haven't heard yet if this has been effective and the process does require the tenant to document everything and spend some time making their case.

While I understand that price dictates where a person can afford to rent, you should do some research before renting a place to live. An easy way to do this would be to check for previous complaints with Code Enforcement. If the location you’re looking at renting has multiple units, you could check with other tenants about any tenant/landlord issues they might be aware of. Unfortunately, there seems to be no shortage of slumlords out there. But if you do your homework before signing a lease you’ll have a far better chance of not renting from one. Remember, it’s much easier to get into a lease then to break one.

All of my previous columns are available on our website [www.pprbd.org](http://www.pprbd.org)
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