ROOFING BID COMPARISON CHECKLIST

This is a checklist for comparing commercial roofing bids. It assumes you have two or three in front of you and the numbers do not line up, which is the normal situation rather than an unusual one.

The aim is not to find the lowest price. It is to find out what the differences actually are.

WHAT EACH BID MUST STATE

ITEM	WHY IT MATTERS
☐ System, named by manufacturer and product	Type alone does not define what is being installed
☐ Recover or tear off	The single largest cost difference between two bids
☐ Insulation type and thickness	Invisible once installed, and easy to reduce quietly
☐ Attachment method	Governs wind performance and deck suitability
☐ Surface preparation	Governs whether anything sticks to anything else
☐ Detail treatment	Upstands, curbs, penetrations, edge metal
☐ Drainage work	Outlets, strainers, clamping rings, overflows
☐ Deck repair rate	A number per unit area, not a sentence of reassurance
☐ Disposal	Where the old roof goes and who pays
☐ Exclusions	Written down, rather than discovered later

WHERE THE DIFFERENCES HIDE

LOOK AT	WHAT TO ASK
☐ A much lower price	What is excluded that the others have included

LOOK AT	WHAT TO ASK
☐ A much higher price	What is included that the others have not
☐ Insulation thickness	Whether it meets current code for this building
☐ Preparation allowance	How it is specified and how it is verified
☐ Detail work	Whether each detail type is named or covered by one line
☐ Drainage	Whether it appears at all
☐ Equipment handling	Who lifts, disconnects and reinstates rooftop plant
☐ Phasing	Whether the price assumes an empty or an occupied building

THE COMMERCIAL TERMS

COMPARE	WHAT TO WATCH FOR
☐ Payment schedule	A deposit proportionate to materials, not to the project
☐ Change order process	How a variation is priced and who authorizes it
☐ Retention	An amount held until completion and sign off
☐ Programme	Duration, and the weather assumptions behind it
☐ Liability during the works	Who carries the risk of water entering an open roof
☐ Lien waivers	Provided as payments are made

THE WARRANTY, AS ITS OWN COLUMN

COMPARE	WHY
☐ Issuer	Manufacturer, contractor, or both
☐ Scope	Material only, or material and labor
☐ Duration	And the date it runs from

COMPARE	WHY
☐ Conditions	What voids it, and what maintenance it requires
☐ Transferability	Whether it survives a sale, and at what cost
☐ Who performs the required maintenance	And at whose expense

THE FIVE QUESTIONS FOR EVERY BIDDER

ASK	WHAT A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE
☐ What preparation have you allowed?	A method and a way of verifying it
☐ How will the details be formed?	Named details, not a general assurance
☐ What is your deck repair rate?	A figure per unit area
☐ How is the roof secured each night?	A described, practiced routine
☐ Who will be on site?	Named crew, directly employed or named subcontractor

WHAT TO DO WITH IT

1. **Write one scope and issue it to everybody.** This is the step that makes the rest possible.
2. **Put the answers next to the prices.** The differences show up in the answers.
3. **Ask the lowest bidder what is excluded.** Neutrally, and expect a straight answer.
4. **Treat the warranty as a separate column.** Not as part of the number.
5. **Accept a cheap bid when the reason is explainable.** Cheap is not the same as thin.

Want the reasoning behind these checks? Read how to choose a contractor and what drives commercial roofing cost.

Walked by _____ Date _____ Roof _____