

# Roofing's Rep

*Despite new legislation and awareness campaigns, some areas are seeing an 80 percent increase in roofing scams*

By Erika Taylor & Professional Remodeler Staff

Roofing companies have long dealt with an industrywide reputation for unethical and sometimes criminal conduct. Better Business Bureaus across the country post seemingly daily alerts warning consumers of fraudulent roofing companies. The media jumps in as well with frequent headlines such as, “Follow These Tips to Stay Away From Roofing Scams.” Legislators have also acted.

In 2013, Texas passed a law prohibiting roofers from functioning as insurance adjusters, a common method of bilking homeowners. The same year, Kansas and North Carolina tightened licensing requirements, and Tennessee cracked down on misleading communication from roofing firms.

Yet, like a ceiling leak that won't quit, the problem persists.

An exceptionally snowy winter has meant a large number of damaged roofs, especially in New England, and police in one Boston suburb report an 80 percent increase in scams involving unlicensed roofing companies charging inflated prices for subpar work.

In an all-too-common con that went on for years in upstate New York, the father-son team of Anthony and Geno Delmaros would arrive to do a roofing job, tell the homeowners that they needed additional cash for materials to get started, then vanish with the money.

And in one of the larger cases of its kind, the former owners of American Shingle were charged with stealing more than \$650,000 from Kansas City, Mo., area residents. Three people face felony

## FAST FACT

Home improvement & construction ranks No. 2 in consumer complaints nationwide. This includes “shoddy work” and failure to start or complete projects.

SOURCE: CONSUMER FEDERATION OF AMERICA

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PHOTO: TAMMRA MCCAULEY, CREATIVE COMMONS

counts for stealing and deceptive business practices.

But while the issue gives the whole industry a black eye, reputable roofing companies can fight back by establishing their longevity and business best practices as a way to differentiate themselves from the herd. Many lead local philanthropic efforts, a tactic now being encouraged at the association level.

In an effort to counter the ongoing barrage of negative stories, the National Roofing Contractors Association has created a blog called “Roof Scoop” for industry news and commentary, and is promoting National Roofing Week, July 4–11, 2015. The blog also urges homeowners to choose contractors that are NRCA members and advises members to post about their experience participating in philanthropic and other community endeavors. **PR**