



**WESTERN CANADA  
CHAPTER**

## **THE VALUES OF ROOF CONSULTING SERVICES**

### **About RCI**

RCI, Inc is an international non-profit association of professional consultants, architects and engineers who specialize in roofing, waterproofing and building enclosure specifications and design.

Since 1983 the Institute's professional members have offered unbiased design, repair planning, quality observance, legal testimony and management services. Since 2006, RCI (formally the Roof Consulting Institute) expanded its mission and services to include waterproofing and the building envelope.

RCI members adhere to a strict ethics code that offers unprejudiced service without affiliations with any product, manufacturer or contractor. Current membership numbers more than two thousand, including professional members and those from industry or facility management.

### **What You Really Ought To Know.....**

#### **Bridging the gap**

As technical issues have become more complex, there are today several important reasons to have a roof consultant as part of one's team. Possession of an architectural or engineering degree does not always mean that the degree holder has adequate knowledge or experience in roofing design. Many design professionals have found that membership in the RCI was the only way to become and remain proficient in roofing and waterproofing issues or design.

To further enhance the level of professionalism in this specific design industry, the Institute grants credentials to 4 groups of individuals. The RRC (Registered Roof Consultant) is granted to those professionals who possess established requirements in education, training and experience and are successful in achieving a successful score on an eight-hour examination. The RRO (Registered Roof Observer) requires similar attributes to the RRC, but is focused on quality observation and evaluation of roofing installations. The RWC (Registered Waterproofing Consultant) and the REWC (Registered Exterior Wall Consultant) are similar to the RRC designation except that the main focus is on the waterproofing or exterior walls observed throughout the entire building envelope.

### **The Building Owners Perspective**

For owners to effectively manage their buildings or components they first have to know how much roof they have, what it consists of and its general condition. A professional roof consultant can inventory and develop an identification system for the complex, keeping in mind that the roof assemblies may be different for each section of roof. With this information the roof consultant can assist the owner in developing a long-term solution of their roofing needs.

The services of a roof consultant can be especially beneficial to the owner in the implementation of roof replacement and maintenance projects. The quality of a roof replacement or major maintenance project is dependent on the appropriateness of the remediation, the quality of the roofing specification, the workmanship and quality control of the contractor and finally the field inspection of the consultant, this to ensure the final product meets specification.

While many owners fully understand the value of the above-mentioned services, they may worry that these services will place additional burden on their limited budgets. A competitive tendering process overseen by a Roof Consultant can yield benefits that can more than offset the fees charged to the owner by the consultant. The elimination of so called grey areas can be accomplished, while many surprise "extras" can be discharged.

With the consultant preparing specifications, conducting tendering meetings and inspecting field workmanship, it is unlikely that the owner will face roof performance problems with the new roof assembly. Should problems arise however, the consultant is well positioned to protect the owner's interest in getting the problem addressed.

A professional consultant will have made the owner aware of the warranty advantages/disadvantages of various products and with the help of clear and concise

specifications, will allow the contract documents to underline the warrantee and contractor obligations.

### **The Roofing Contractors Perspective**

As noted above, it would seem that some added value is observed with owners employing professional consultants. Simply put another way, every roofing project requires three fundamental characteristics:

- Proper technical design
- The right choice of materials
- Quality application

Roofing contractors are to be regarded as professional constructors and product applicators, not as licensed or registered consultants (carrying E & O insurance) responsible for overall roof design. Dilemmas over drainage or wind uplift for example, are critical roof design elements. Drains, scuppers and roof slope must be properly designed to provide adequate drainage, minimize ponding water, meet plumbing code and comply with the selected roofing manufactures warrantee requirements.

Code compliance in most aspects (not all), may be beyond the contractors area of expertise. An independent professional source should be responsible for meeting such provincial and national codes, which may include requirements for:

- Wind uplift
- Thermal insulation
- Fire resistance requirement
- Slope
- Drains and overflows
- Safety and Insurance issues

For contractors, having well defined bidding documents and an organized pre-bid meeting can be seen as first “comfort zone” step in ensuring a successful roofing project. Clean, unbiased and knowledgeable specifications enable the contractor to perform the work in a spirit of mutual co-operation.

## **Education and Online Library**

The Western Canada Chapter of RCI Inc. presents education programs for all levels and backgrounds. The programs are designed to demystify and explain the practical applications of roofing waterproofing technology ([www.rciwesterncanadachapter.org](http://www.rciwesterncanadachapter.org)).

In addition the RCI online technical library/articles is a dynamic, comprehensive searchable online library that includes technical, historical and innovative roofing and waterproofing information. The site is a free information service provided by RCI, as a means to promote professionalism, education and research throughout the roofing industry. ( [RCi-online.org](http://RCi-online.org) )

The content of the database span decades and covers a myriad of topics. From venting to drainage, the easy to use library is an ever-evolving resource for disseminating information about roofing. Drop by and have a look.

John A. Pitre RRC RRO

