

Roof Plumber interview questions

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What to expect

Roof plumbing interviews usually mix practical trade knowledge with safety judgement. Employers want to know you can set out a roof, fabricate flashings, work to the NCC and AS/NZS 3500.3, and stay safe at height while keeping the client informed.

- **Technical knowledge:** Questions about roof drainage, flashings, penetration sealing and reading plans.
- **Process and planning:** Walk-throughs of how you measure, order, set out and install a roof.
- **Safety and working at heights:** Scenarios about harness use, weather, access and emergency response.
- **Behavioural:** Past examples of teamwork, problem solving, reliability and quality control.
- **Client-facing and quoting:** How you explain options, scope work and handle homeowner concerns.
- **Code compliance:** How you apply the NCC, AS/NZS 3500.3 and manufacturer details.

A typical hiring process starts with a phone screen, then a face to face or site based interview with a supervisor or plumbing manager. You may be asked to walk through a recent job, complete a short practical task such as measuring a flashing or identifying a roof drainage fault, and answer safety questions. Some employers include a paid trial day or a toolbox meeting visit before making an offer.

1. Walk me through how you install a complete roof drainage system on a new house, from receiving the plans to final handover.

Why they ask

This tests your planning, sequencing and code knowledge, not just whether you can fix a gutter.

How to structure your answer

A chronological walk-through: confirm scope, check plans and stormwater layout, measure and order, set out and install gutters and downpipes, fabricate flashings, test with water, inspect and hand over.

Example answer

"I start by checking the plans and the stormwater layout so I know where every downpipe discharges and what fall the gutter needs. I measure the roof, work out material quantities and order the gutter, downpipe and flashing profiles. On site I set up edge protection and check the harness and anchor points. I install the fascia brackets, then the gutter with the correct fall, followed by downpipes and rainwater heads. I fabricate flashings for valleys, ridges, penetrations and wall junctions, sealing each one to the manufacturer's detail. Before handover I run water through the gutter and check every outlet, then walk the roof to confirm no fixings are proud and no sealant is smeared. I leave the site clean and give the supervisor a written note of any maintenance items."

2. You arrive at a repair where water is tracking along a valley and entering a ceiling. How do you find the source and fix it?

Why they ask

This probes fault finding and whether you solve the cause rather than replacing parts and hoping.

How to structure your answer

A diagnostic sequence: gather history, inspect from inside and outside, isolate sections, water test, repair and verify.

Example answer

"I ask the homeowner when the leak appears and whether it follows heavy rain or wind driven rain. Inside the roof space I look for staining and follow the trail back to the highest point. Outside I check the valley, flashings, gutter fall and any penetrations above the stain. I often isolate sections by running water from a hose at the low end and working upward. Once I find the failed seal, cracked flashing or blocked valley, I remove the damaged section, clean it, and refit or reseal to the manufacturer's detail. If the gutter is holding water, I correct the fall. After the repair I water test again and check the ceiling for any new moisture before I pack up."

3. You are working on a steep metal roof when the weather changes quickly. What do you do?

Why they ask

This is a safety judgement question. Employers want to hear you stop work before the situation becomes an emergency.

How to structure your answer

A stop, assess, secure, communicate and document structure.

Example answer

"I stop work straight away and keep my harness clipped to the anchor point. I check the wind and rain, and whether the roof surface has become slippery. If there is any lightning or gusty wind, I come down using the safest route, not the quickest. I secure loose sheets, tools and flashing so nothing can blow off the roof. I let the site supervisor and the homeowner know that work is paused and agree on a restart time. I record the weather stop in the site diary and check the roof and access equipment before anyone goes back up. No job is worth a fall, so I would not restart until conditions are safe."

4. Tell me about a time you found a defect or incorrect detail that others had missed.

Why they ask

This looks at quality control, ownership and how you communicate a problem without causing conflict.

How to structure your answer

STAR: situation, task, action, result. Keep it specific and finish with what changed because of you.

Example answer

"On a re-roof, I was checking the plans before installing new gutters and noticed the downpipe positions did not line up with the stormwater pits on the engineer's drawing. The previous roofer had already set two outlets in the wrong place. I took photos and marked the issue on the plan, then spoke to the site supervisor the same morning. We agreed to move the outlets and add a new downpipe so the roof drained to the pits without crossing the path. I fabricated the extra flashing and adjusted the gutter fall. The final plumbing inspection passed, and the supervisor used my mark-ups for the next two units. It taught me to check the drainage design before fixing anything in place."

5. A homeowner wants a quote to replace gutters and downpipes on a two storey house. How do you scope and explain the work?

Why they ask

This tests quoting, communication and whether you can sell a sensible scope without overcommitting.

How to structure your answer

A consultative sequence: listen, inspect, measure, explain options, confirm access, put it in writing.

Example answer

"I start by asking what problem they are trying to solve, whether it is overflowing gutters, rust or a leak near the foundation. I inspect the roof from the ground and then safely from the roof or an elevated platform. I measure the gutter runs and downpipe heights, check the fascia condition and note any access issues like steep sections, solar panels or garden beds. I explain the difference between

replacing like for like and upgrading to a larger profile or a leaf guard, and I am honest about what needs to be done now and what can wait. I provide a written quote that lists the gutter profile, downpipe size, flashings, disposal of old material and any make good painting. I also explain how we will protect the garden and keep the site safe while working at height."

6. How do you make sure your flashing and penetration details meet the NCC and AS/NZS 3500.3?

Why they ask

This checks that you understand compliance is part of the trade and not paperwork done after the fact.

How to structure your answer

A compliance check: identify the applicable standard, follow manufacturer details, check fall and discharge, inspect and document.

Example answer

"I start with the approved plans and the manufacturer's installation manual for the roofing profile. For stormwater, AS/NZS 3500.3 sets out the design and installation requirements, and the NCC sets the performance requirements for weatherproofing. I check that gutters have the correct fall, downpipes are sized for the roof area and discharge to the legal point of discharge. For flashings I use the standard details for valleys, ridges, wall junctions, pipes and skylights, and I make sure each penetration is sealed with the specified method, not just silicone. If a detail is unclear, I ask the builder or the plumbing regulator's technical team before I install it. I photograph the finished work and keep the manufacturer's data sheet with the job records so the inspection is straightforward."