

FREE REPORT: The 4 things you must do before hiring a contractor.

Choosing the right contractor can be time-consuming, but some forethought and a little research will make the process so much smoother.

1. Establish what sort of contractor is best suited to do the work

Make sure you have done your research and know what work and trades are required. If your project is going to require a variety of work or involve several trades, it may be best to hire a general contractor with experience in all the required trades.

You can start by looking in the Yellow Pages but don't just pick the first name that pops out at you. Remember your contractor will have considerable influence on the quality of the work and your satisfaction with the work process and completed driveway. You should look for contractors who are experienced, have a good reputation and are able to provide you with references and/or show you pictures of projects they have completed, that are similar to yours.

If your project is on a steep slope or hillside section, then it is important that your contractor is experienced in hillside excavation and construction as typically these types of sites add significant complexity to the project and potentially significant cost if the work is done poorly.

Ideally only one contractor should be involved in doing all the work (the main contractor). If sub-contractors are used for any aspect of the job, this should be arranged by your contractor, not by you. Having a main contractor will avoid any conflict between various parties if problems arise during the building process and after work is completed.

2. Short-listing contractors

When you are discussing your project with prospective contractors, you should:

- Ask them about the company, how long it has been in business, their experience in doing projects like yours, the experience of their staff and how the company operates
- Ask for references and/or pictures of previous projects that are similar to yours
- Give them your project plan and ask them if they have any ideas or suggestions to improve the work or add value to the project
- Discuss schedules, timing and start date

Talking to prospective contractors gives you the opportunity to determine how you feel about each contractor. There is no hard or fast rule on how many contractors you speak to. Some people find they only need to talk to one or two contractors; others like to speak to several. What is important is that you have confidence in the contractor and are able to talk with them easily. If not, don't hire them as they are unlikely to be the right contractor for you.

3. Getting quotes

Once you have short listed the contractor(s) you would like to work with, you'll need to get a written quote.

Ask them to visit your site before providing a quote. If you are getting quotes from 2 or more contractors, it is very important that you have a detailed project and specification plan. If you don't provide adequate plans for your project, each contractor will then be left to decide how they will carry out the work and what products and materials they will use. This will leave you with disparate quotes, much like comparing apples with oranges rather than apples with apples.

The quote should clearly spell out the work to be done with a breakdown of all associated costs, the responsibilities of both parties, material and product specifications, responsibility for permits and inspections, the work schedule and price and payment arrangements. Make sure, if required, the quote includes removal of debris and clean-up of the site.

Even with the best planning, projects can be subject to changes for any number of reasons. Make sure you understand the contractor's change order policy and how this can affect the quoted price and schedule.

4. Evaluating Quotes

Carefully review all the information provided in the quotes and consider this along with all the information you gathered at stage 1 and stage 2. Verify each quote covers the work as you have specified and compare pricing, payment terms and work schedule. Choose the contractor and quote that gives you the best value for money and that you feel most comfortable with.

Why you should consider 1Geotechnical for your next project

At 1Geotechnical, we offer a seamless operation and can work with you on everything from initial concept, through to planning, preparation and construction. As no two sites are the same, every project requires its own unique solution. Dealing with us gives you one point of contact, reducing stress and saving you time and money.

We enjoy working on projects of all sizes – from development of large subdivision sites and civil infrastructure to completing the new driveway for your home. Our Team have built a reputation for taking on projects that other companies won't or don't. Whether poor access, steep slopes or hillside locations, we'll work closely with you to identify and solve any issues that may arise during excavation and construction while remaining true to the objectives of the project.

Communication and regular reviews combined with comprehensive project management skills ensure you are kept up to date on progress and results. Our hands-on approach enables us to complete projects without added complexity and cost to you.

Take a look at our website www.1geotechnical.co.nz and especially our Project Gallery for images of our most recent projects. We welcome your enquiry and would be proud to show you our work.