



# Questions to Ask a Contractor

Courtesy of Henry's Construction & Treasure Valley Fence

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Educating our customers prior to our arrival is a passion project for us. We hope to help you feel more informed and better able to make a purchasing decision you are comfortable with. With the tremendous growth in our valley has also come the unfortunate tales of misinformation of the requirements for Idaho contractors. These questions can be helpful to you when searching for other areas of construction for your home and property as well. We know purchasing a fence is a major property investment. We like to say we are more of a security and peace of mind business who happens to specialize in professional fence installation. It's an investment that should provide you comfort in the end. Most people are unaware of the many variables that go into the design and installation of a new fence. Our list of questions will help you determine what design and material might be best for the safety and security of your property. Protect yourself up front by understanding what is important, what to demand, and what to avoid at all costs.

- 1) Are you registered with the Idaho Contractors Board? Do you have any complaints?
  - a) We are registered. Our registration number is RCE-44953. No, we have no complaints. You can search for contractor registration at <https://apps.dopl.idaho.gov/DOPLPublic/LPRBrowser.aspx> and review information on the Contractors Board page at <https://apps.dopl.idaho.gov/DOPLPortal/BoardPage.aspx?Bureau=CON>.
- 2) Are you insured with Workman's Comp and General Liability Insurance?
  - a) Yes, we are insured. Idaho State Insurance Fund holds our workman's compensation insurance and Liberty Mutual Insurance holds our General Liability Insurance. We can have our broker send you those policies.
- 3) What do I need to know to make a smart buying decision?
  - a) Although there is a lot to know about what contributes to making a smart decision in purchasing a fence, it really comes down to quality of materials, installation techniques, and the experience of the contractor. We are members of the American Fence Association. Chris is one of the only Certified Fence Contractors in the Treasure Valley and continued education is important to us. We strive to keep up with current standards of design and installation requirements so we can provide the highest quality installation possible.
- 4) How do I know the Contractor has the proper experience?
  - a) Chris has several years of experience. Our teams also have several years of experience and are highly skilled installers. A good contractor will spend enough time with you before you make your decision answering any questions you have, making you aware of the many options that exist, helping you determine exactly what you want in a fence, so that you wind up with the product that is best for you. He should also have a good working knowledge of the neighborhood or subdivision where you live, so that he is aware of all local codes, and even be familiar with the soil density and rock content of the area to help anticipate any possible needs his crews will have when installing your fence in your yard.
- 5) How do I know what fence style is right for me?
  - a) Fences play many roles, and there are different styles that meet different needs. HOA CC&Rs may regulate your options. Some styles of fences provide greater levels of security than others. Other styles provide more privacy. Still other styles will look better with some types of houses than others. A good contractor will be able to offer any style of fence you might desire, be able to completely and concisely answer any questions you have about it, and be able to install it with his owned trained & experienced crews.

- 6) What do I need to know to look for in a quality fence?
  - a) A quality fence is made up of the finest materials, combined with an installation process that leaves you with a fence that follows the grade of your property where needed, straight, level, sturdy, and one that will stand up to the test of time and give you at least 15 to 20 years of service and peace of mind. The better the materials and installation techniques used, the longer your fence will last.
  
- 7) How do I know what a fence should cost?
  - a) It will vary by type of fence you will order, but the cost of a fence will usually be dependent on a combination of time and materials, and this can vary significantly from one contractor to another. An experienced contractor should be able to explain exactly what goes into a fence if you have questions why one wood fence costs more than another. The least expensive fence is usually cheap for a reason. Inferior materials and a shoddy installation process may lower the cost of a fence, but will always result in an inferior fence. We bid by the section and your estimate will include quality material and labor. We have excellent relationships with our vendors with access to a wide range of material types.
  
- 8) Will the final cost always match the estimate?
  - a) Yes. A competent fence contractor will be able to provide you with a detailed estimate that will cover all anticipated costs, and some variables that may not be so easy to anticipate. For example, some subdivisions are known to have been developed on very rocky soil. If this is the case, a good contractor will put in his estimate contingency information that tells you he may have to use a specialized digging tool like the Dandy Digger if rock formations are below the soil. But unless there are changes to the original fence plan, like added gates or extra coverage, the final price should ALWAYS match the estimate. Do not go with a fencing contractor that will not make this guarantee!
  
- 9) What is your process for installation, crew arrival, typical work day, and project completion?
  - a) Once the deposit is received, we begin the process of material staging, staging crews, calling for a public utility locate with DigLine, coming out again prior to installation for project review prior to crew arrival. The day your design is scheduled to begin always starts with installation team meeting to discuss any questions, material load, and arrival. If the design has tear out of existing fence, that will be completed, followed by post holes dug and posts set. Installation time depends on the size of the design. Most average lots can be installed within 2 to 3 days. Once the project is completed, there will be a final design walk through to ensure your satisfaction. Any professional fence contractor will have a procedure in place that the crew goes through before leaving the job. This should include the job foreman and at least one crewmember walking the entire job site inspecting the workmanship and the post job clean up, ensuring everything has been completed according to the initial plan and intent. The final action should be a meeting with the homeowner to answer any questions, provide maintenance suggestions, and demonstrate any components like gates or removable panels. The final invoice should only be presented when the homeowner is totally satisfied with the end result.
  
- 10) What else do I need to be aware of?
  - a) Don't forget about your neighbors, even if one of the main reasons to have your fence installed is to keep them out. Installing a new fence is a disruption, and communicating in advance what to expect is a basic courtesy. Look for a contractor that understands this and is willing to help you prepare them for what to expect. If your neighbors are informed up front of what to expect, when the installation will take place, and when it will be complete, they are much less likely to have a problem with it. We work with neighbors all the time. Please mention to us if you need help working with your neighbors or have made arrangements to share cost with your neighbors. We are happy to help with that.

In closing, I hope these questions are helpful in your decision-making process. Our goal is to help you be informed, safe and secure. The more knowledge you have to make your decision, the more comfortable you will feel with your contractor and installation team.

