

## Questions to Ask your Contractor

Hiring a qualified and reputable contractor is one of the most important parts of completing your home whether it is building the home from scratch, putting in a water system, driveway, irrigation system or **Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (Sewage Treatment System (Septic))**.

Which questions should you, the homeowner / contractor, ask prior to signing contracts, paying deposits and starting your project.

**Do Not be in a Rush.** Take the time to formulate the questions important to you and to interview your prospective contractors.

The interview process is extremely important to ensure you can make an informed decision. Determining the contractor's level of experience and training, as well as their access to the equipment needed to complete the work will help you feel confident in your decision making. Years of experience is not the only consideration. Those contractors with current training and those engaging in ongoing professional development may be more up-to-date on regulatory changes, new technologies and research.

Below is a list of questions you might ask in the interview process. Please note: some of these questions may or may not apply to your scope of work.

**For all disciplines the following questions apply:**

1. Is the authorized person certified with Alberta Municipal Affairs (Those working in the onsite wastewater industry in Alberta are required to hold a current Certificate of Competency in Private Sewage.)
2. Which competencies/services are you authorized to perform? (Designer, Installer, Maintenance, Inspection)
3. How long has your business been in operation?
4. Are you a Sole Proprietor or an Incorporated Business?
5. How many people work for your company?
6. What types of insurance do you carry? Professional Liability (Errors and Omissions), General Construction, Liability. (Request a copy insurance certificate if you plan to move forward with the contractor)
7. Do you work with a quote or on a cost-plus basis? Do you use a contract?
8. Do you offer any warranties or guarantees on components and or your work?
9. What is your timeline for starting, implementing, and completing our project?
10. What is your payment schedule?

11. Do you require a retainer/deposit prior to starting our project?
12. What personnel will be working on my job? Do you have a WCB account? Can I get your account number?
13. What hours of the day will you be working on-site?
14. What equipment do you have to professionally complete our project?
15. Have you ever had disciplinary actions taken against you by your certifying body (Alberta Municipal Affairs, Alberta Safety Codes Council)? If yes, please explain.
16. Has a customer ever taken legal action against you? If yes, please explain.
17. Do you have references I can contact?

***The following questions only apply to "Designers":***

18. How much Errors and Omissions insurance do you carry?
19. How long have you been designing onsite sewage systems?
20. What kind of septic systems have you designed in the past?
21. How much time do you spend on continuing education every year?
22. Do you subcontract your work for installation or design?
23. Am I, an excavating contractor, or another authorized person allowed to install your designs under your supervision?
24. If yes, are there any costs associated with supervision/inspections?
25. How many inspections do you require?

***The following questions only apply to "Installers":***

1. How long have you been installing onsite sewage systems?
2. What types of systems have you installed in the past?
3. Do you install engineered systems?
4. How many people work on your install crew?
5. What equipment do you use?

6. How long do you anticipate our project will take?
7. Do you use any subcontractors?
8. Do you provide written quotes/contracts?
9. What is not typically included in your quotes?
10. Have you ever had to go back and repair a system install because of how you installed it? If yes, please explain what happened and how you rectified it.

***The following questions only apply to “Maintenance Providers”:***

26. How long have you been maintaining systems?
27. Do you use a maintenance contract?
28. What are the costs involved for a maintenance assessment?
29. What system types have you been maintaining?
  - a. If Type II (secondary treatment) system – what makes and models do you have experience with?
30. What specialized equipment do you use?
31. How long does it take to maintain a specific treatment system?
32. How long do you keep your reports on file for systems that you maintain?
33. Do you correspond to the Designer or Installer if you find something that needs repair or attention?

***The following questions only apply to “Inspectors”***

34. Do you perform residential or commercial inspections?
35. How many systems do you inspect per year?
36. How long have you been certified and practicing?
37. Are there different levels of inspection?
38. What are the costs involved?
39. Can you provide a list of references I can contact?