



**A Home Owners Guide - Tips on Hiring Foundation
Repair Contractors**



These best practices for hiring a foundation repair contractor can apply to working with any home repair contractor. Everything is covered, from tips on finding foundation repair contractors to what the foundation repair contract should include.

One of the most frustrating problems with foundation repair is that there are few if any accepted standards. This makes it especially important for home owners to carefully question contractors before signing on the dotted line.

Start with narrowing down which contractors and/or engineers to get an inspection from.

1. Request proof of insurance: workers compensation, liability, vehicle.
2. Get local references and contact them.
3. Ask how long the contractor has been in business. Check the online records at the Texas Secretary of State to verify company claims.
4. Check to see if the contractor is member of the Foundation Repair Association; if they are not, do not hire them.
5. Check with the local Better Business Bureau to see if any complaints have been filed and whether they were resolved.

Get at least two bids that are based on the same scope of work. If the first set of bids address different portions of home, then request that the contractors rebid the work so that they are all lifting the same areas. Expect recommendations to differ significantly. A thorough evaluation should include:

1. Measuring the outside dimensions of the home and drawing the footprint (outline of the foundation) to scale.
2. Drawing off the interior floor plan of the home.
3. Examination and notation of all interior and exterior damage.
4. An elevation survey done using surveying equipment.
5. A contour diagram, showing elevation changes and the locations of supports.
6. For pier and beams homes, a thorough inspection of the crawl space, with photographs.

Insist on clear explanations that make sense. There are many foundation repair techniques. Ask why the proposed technique will work and what circumstances might cause it to not be the best solution.

Get in writing that there will be no additional costs beyond what is in the contract. No caps on costs is like giving a contractor a blank check.

Beware of claims of being the fastest or cheapest. Bids can vary due to material quality and labor requirements.

Ask contractors about their warranty; how long the work will be guaranteed for, what are the terms of transfer to new owners, and how is it guaranteed should the contractor go out of business. For warranty trusts, get the name of the trustee. Call the trustee. Verify that the money can only be used for warranty claims and that the contractor cannot withdraw money for any reason. Find out how much money has been deposited. For insurance policies, make sure that there is no continuing need to make premium payments. Get the offered warranty in writing. Read it carefully.

Get everything in writing. If it was in the estimate or a verbal promise was made, make sure it is in the contract. The written contract should include:

1. A complete description of the work to be done, including the number of foundation supports, the type of foundation supports, and a list of additional services that are included, such as pressure grouting or mudjacking, engineer's reports, plumbing tests and permits.
2. Job schedule with projected completion dates.
3. The total cost including a note that there will not be additional costs beyond what the contract states.
4. Permit and inspection responsibilities
5. A payment schedule.
6. The warranty.
7. The contractor's full name, address, phone and fax number.
8. Cancellation details.

Never sign a blank contract. Read the entire document carefully. Keep a copy after both parties have signed the contract. On any foundation work, expect the down payment to be approximately half of the contract price and the balance due upon completion. Never pay the full amount in advance. Get a receipt all payments.

Advanced Foundation Repair offers home repairs from the foundation up including foundation repair, plumbing, and general construction services. Advanced Foundation Repair has specialized in solving the foundation repair needs of Texas homeowners for over 100 years. Advanced Foundation Repair's reputation assures customers that they will receive prompt honest and reliable service.

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