

Compare and decide:

A tool for RATING and SELECTING your landscape contractor

Use this chart two ways: 1. As a simple guideline to the qualities you should be looking for in a landscape contractor, or
2. As a rating system to help you determine more specifically the suitability of a contractor you are considering hiring. It's your choice.



Company A: _____

Company B: _____

Company C: _____

Proof of Workers' Compensation Insurance

Mandatory: Rate 5 or 0 only

Landscape contractors are required by law to pay WSIB premiums on behalf of their employees in the event of a workplace injury. Hiring companies that are not in compliance makes the project owner – you – liable in case of workplace injuries. Ask to see a Certificate of Clearance.

Proof of Liability Insurance

Mandatory: Rate 5 or 0 only

All contractors should carry liability insurance to protect themselves and their clients from the expense of any unforeseen workplace incidents that might cause damage to your own or neighbouring properties. Ask to see a Certificate of Insurance; it should state the name and address of the contractor, the fact the company carries a minimum of \$1 million commercial general liability, including coverage for bodily injury and property damage, and the effective and expiry dates of the policy as well as the date of issue of the certificate.

Supplier References

Rate 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)

By ensuring that the contractor regularly pays material suppliers in accordance with standard trade terms, you can protect yourself from creditor liabilities. Depending on the size of the project, it is advisable to obtain up to three supplier references. If possible, obtain references from suppliers of materials designated for your project, such as interlocking stone, nursery stock, timber, etc.

Contract

Rate 1 to 5

A written and signed contract protects the interests of both homeowners and contractors. Contracts should clearly stipulate details such as payment schedules, start dates, and the complete scope of the project. Areas of responsibility, such as the provision for underground service locates, permits, etc. should also be stipulated. A good contract will also define procedures for the approval of change orders and costs of extras.

Warranty

Rate 1 to 5

The terms and conditions of the contractor's warranty should be clearly spelled out in writing and should specify if the workmanship is warranted and for how long and the length of the guarantee on materials. It is important to specify responsibilities for ongoing maintenance, such as watering, that may affect the warranty. This is especially important for plant guarantees.

Client References

Rate 1 to 5

Whether the contractor you are considering is capable of handling your project can best be determined by asking for references from up to three recent clients. Answers to the following questions will help you rate the value of the references:

- Was the work completed on time?
- Was there sufficient supervisory staff on site?
- Did the contractor return phone calls promptly?
- Was the quality of workmanship acceptable?
- Did staff conduct themselves in a professional manner?
- Was the site kept tidy throughout the construction process?
- Were extras dealt with according to the terms of the contract?

Companies Under Review

A B C

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Human Resources

Rate 1 to 5

The number of employees, including supervisors, should be adequate for the size of the project. It is important to remember that a small company with one crew may well be sufficient for smaller projects, providing they have adequately scheduled their projects for the season. A company's ability to schedule projects can also be determined through client references (see left).

Employee Experience, Education, and Certification

Rate 1 to 5

Determine the level of training and experience of key and supervisory personnel. Post secondary degrees, apprenticeship program participation or certification through the Landscape Industry Certified program are all indicators of skilled, committed employees. More information on green industry certification programs is available at bclna.com/certification-and-training



Equipment Resources

Rate 1 to 5

Contractors should have adequate equipment resources to complete jobs efficiently. It is important to remember that it may be more cost-effective for certain or specialized pieces of equipment to be rented on an as-needed basis.

Scope of Expertise (including sub-contractors)

Rate 1 to 5

Determine which specific disciplines are required for your project. The company should be skilled in all aspects or use reputable sub-contractors. These include disciplines such as:

- paving stone
- water features
- earth-work (grading, etc.)
- demolition
- natural stone work
- lighting
- soft landscaping (tree and shrub installation)
- site clean-up
- carpentry
- irrigation

Years in Business

Rate 1 to 5

How many years has the company been in business under its current name?

Company Profile

Rate 1 to 5

Does the company project a professional image? Are its representatives in uniform? Are its trucks and equipment clean and well cared for?

Association Membership

Rate 1 to 5

Members of BCLNA are required to follow a Code of Ethics and a Code of Conduct. Association membership indicates a company's commitment to professionalism.

Companies Under Review

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Totals *Tip: A perfect score is 65, any total less than 49 indicates a score below 75%.*