



## Beyond the Bottom Line: Evaluating Contractors for Your Commercial Parking Lot Maintenance

As a commercial property owner or manager, maintaining your parking lot is essential. But with numerous contractors vying for your business, choosing the right one can be overwhelming. Don't be swayed solely by the lowest price on the estimate. Here's a comprehensive guide to evaluating and qualifying contractors based on their proposals, ensuring you get the best value for your property.

### Going Beyond the Numbers: Scrutinizing the Scope of Work

The estimate is your roadmap for the project. Here's what to inspect:

- **Detailed Breakdown:** A good estimate clearly outlines the specific tasks included, such as crack filling, sealcoating, pothole patching, and sweeping. Be wary of vague descriptions like "parking lot maintenance" or a lump sum proposal without itemized cost breakdowns for each service. In the event you elect to eliminate a line item you don't want to know the exact credit amount from the contractor's proposal.
- **Item Quantity:** The estimate should specify the exact quantity for each item (ie: 55,000 square feet of asphalt seal coating, 700 square feet of asphalt repair, 3,500 linear feet of crack sealing etc.). If the contractor does not specify an exact quantity it gives them an opportunity to increase the job cost once the project begins because they can claim they only proposed to do "X" not "Y."
- **Preparation Work:** Proper site preparation is crucial. Does the estimate include cleaning, traffic control, or the number of mobilizations they propose to complete the work? If you own / manage a strip mall an unseasoned or inexperienced contractor may assume they are

sealcoating the entire project in 1 mobilization while you may think they understand it needs to be done in 4 mobilizations as to not interfere with your tenants business. Ensure all necessary preparatory steps are factored in.

- **Warranty Information:** A reputable contractor will offer a warranty on their work. Review the warranty terms to understand the duration and coverage for defects or workmanship issues.

## Vetting the Contractor: Beyond the Paper Trail

A well-written estimate is just the first step. Here's how to qualify the contractor's capabilities:

- **Experience and Expertise:** Ask about their experience with commercial parking lot maintenance, particularly projects similar to yours. Search Google for the contractor's name (both personal and business- some unscrupulous contractors change company names yearly. If you search their personal name, it should return search results). Does the Google search results demonstrate proof of the contractors claims as to the type and size project your is? Is there proof of projects online they have completed?
- **Equipment and Manpower:** Does the contractor have the necessary equipment for the job? Will they have enough workers to complete the project efficiently and safely?
- **Insurance and Licensing:** Verify that the contractor has proper liability and workers' compensation insurance. Ensure they hold any necessary licenses or permits required in your area. New Jersey requires a Home Improvement Contractors License for any residential contract over \$500.00 and Delaware requires not only a state wide contractors license but registration with the Delaware Department Of Labor.
- **References and Reviews:** Ask for references from past clients and check online review platforms. Positive feedback from other commercial property managers is a strong indicator of quality service.
- **Response Time:** How long did it take for the contractor to respond to the estimate request?

## Making the Right Choice: Value Over Price



The lowest estimate might seem tempting, but remember, the cheapest option might not be the best investment in the long run. Consider these factors when making your final decision:

- **Total Value:** Balance the cost with the quality of materials, thoroughness of the scope of work, and warranty offered.
- **Experience and Reputation:** Choose a contractor with a proven track record and expertise in commercial parking lot maintenance.
- **Communication and Trust:** Does the contractor clearly explain the process and address your questions promptly? Good communication throughout the project is essential.

## **Investing in a Long-Term Solution**

By taking the time to evaluate contractors based on their estimates, experience, and qualifications, you can select a partner that delivers both quality and value. Remember, a well-maintained parking lot not only protects your investment but also ensures a safe and attractive environment for your tenants and visitors. Don't settle – choose a contractor who prioritizes the long-term health of your valuable commercial property.