

Identify engineering services your project will require

Engineers provide a myriad of services for both residential and commercial properties. Before you choose an engineering firm, it's best to first identify the exact service that you need.

By making a list of the services you require, you can better find the engineering company that specializes in those needs.

When selecting an engineer, it's important to pay attention to accreditation. The entire industry is closely monitored, with each state having its own laws and requirements regulating the engineering practice. Generally, licensing for engineers requires graduation from an accredited engineering curriculum, four years of experience. A written exam is often required as well.

Reputable engineers will typically be members of the American Society of Civil Engineers or the National Society of Professional Engineers. In Colorado, a reputable surveyor will usually be a member of the Professional Land Surveyors of Colorado.

You'll want to be sure that the person you hire can give you complete follow-up services on your project. Some surveyors and engineers may not have been practicing long enough to chalk up years of expertise, but that doesn't necessarily mean they'll do a bad job. You'll need to make sure, however, that they've already estab-

lished a reputation for warranty work and follow-up.

If the engineer or surveyor you select is a member of one of the nationally known accrediting societies, it's a good indicator that they'll be there to provide the follow-up services you'll need — even if they're new to the industry.

Experts agree that it's of critical importance to use local contractors whenever you can. A knowledge of county court records and archives is key to any type of engineering project. Local civil engineers and surveyors will be aware of the planning and zoning regulations in your area — regulations which differ in each county and municipality and can be subject to constant change. In addition, a surveyor who is familiar with your locality will have easier access to information about the history

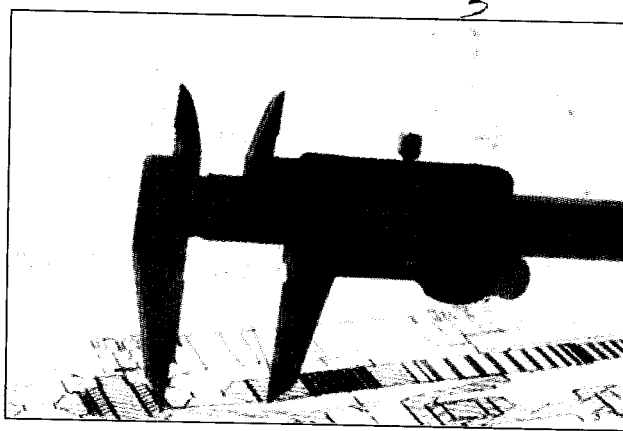
of what has previously been done to the property.

Municipal staff members, particularly in the Department of Public Works, can be a good source for referrals. Another good resource is the Internet. Since municipal engineering projects are a matter of public record, you'll be able to find files and documentation on the different types of projects completed by the engineering and surveying firms in your area.

Also, it's good to remember that bigger isn't necessarily better. Depending on the project, a small local firm can often get the job done with just as much efficiency as a huge corporate engineering company. In fact, smaller companies tend to develop a stable staff, which means that at the completion of the project you should be able to get in touch with the same contractor for follow-up or further projects along the line.

If you do choose a smaller company, however, make sure that they have sufficient state-of-the-art equipment and technical resources in order to handle the job properly and efficiently.

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