Hiring a septic company? Ask these questions first.

Septic work is priced on site, not online -- no company in this guide publishes prices on its own website. So don't just compare prices. Send these questions with every quote request, and judge each company by how it answers. A good company welcomes every one of them.

First, check the license

Ask for the company's Connecticut license number and verify it free at elicense.ct.gov (Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection). If a company can't give you a number, or won't answer when you ask for one, that's a red flag. Repairs and replacements also need approval from your local health district, and bigger jobs require a B-100 plan.

The six questions

1. When was my tank last pumped, and what will you check besides pumping?

What you're listening for: a good visit checks baffles, filters, scum and sludge levels, and the condition of the drainfield -- not just the pumping.

2. Does my system need risers or an effluent filter?

What you're listening for: both make future service cheaper and protect the drainfield.

3. What will this visit cost, including digging, if the lids are buried?

What you're listening for: digging out buried lids is the most common surprise charge.

4. Do you handle the health district paperwork for repairs?

What you're listening for: repairs and replacements in Connecticut need local health district approval, and bigger jobs require a B-100 plan.

5. If the system fails, who do I call and how fast do you come?

What you're listening for: ask explicitly about emergencies and same-day service -- several companies in this guide offer it.

6. Can you show me my property's pumping record?

What you're listening for: a company that keeps records makes the next visit much easier, and a future home sale.

Red flags -- walk away if you see these

- A quote given over the phone without asking tank size, access, or last pumping
- No license number, and no answer when you ask for one
- Pressure to sign a replacement contract before an inspection
- A price far below every competitor -- usually missing the digging, the filter, or disposal
- No pumping or inspection record offered

Free from Fairfield Septic Guide -- every verified septic company in Fairfield County, compared in one place: services, service areas, and what septic work should cost here. fairfieldsepticguide.com