# How to Compare Foundation Repair Proposals

**Homeowner guide**

Two proposals can respond to the same concern and cover different work. Before comparing prices, put the bids side by side and identify the condition each addresses, what each contractor assumes and how completion will be checked. Ask for those details in writing. Federal Trade Commission, How To Avoid a Home Improvement Scam

## What each proposal aims to address

Write the stated objective in a sentence and mark the proposed work area on a sketch or photo. For example, is the goal to reduce water reaching a wall, stabilize a specified area, or attempt to lift part of the structure? If the proposal uses a broad phrase such as “foundation repair,” ask the contractor to describe the condition it addresses and the result the owner should expect.

Share the same inspection report, prior repair records and dated observations with each bidder. If an engineer has recommended work, give each bidder the same version and ask them to show how their proposal follows it. Ask for a written explanation when the approach differs.

## Compare assumptions and scope

For each bid, record the location, extent and materials or system proposed. Ask what is included for access, excavation or protection of the property if relevant, and who handles restoration, cleanup, permitting, design and observation of the work. Record exclusions and items priced separately. Ask what conditions could trigger extra work and how a change would be priced, documented and approved. Once scope is clear, compare price and schedule against the work each contractor has included. Federal Trade Commission, How To Avoid a Home Improvement Scam

### Fictional bid comparison

Both excerpts respond to an owner who reported dampness and a crack near the same basement corner. The excerpts show how to compare scope. The appropriate next step for a real property depends on an evaluation.

| Compare | Bid A · Exterior runoff work | Bid B · Local structural support work |
|---|---|---|
| **Repair objective** | Redirect roof runoff away from the affected corner. | Stabilize the specified corner using supports per a separate engineer’s design. |
| **Assumption** | The downspout serves the affected area and can discharge at the agreed outlet. | The owner will provide repair drawings before installation. |
| **Excluded scope** | Wall repair and structural support work. | Drainage work, lifting and interior finish restoration. |
| **Verification offered** | Record the outlet location and provide photos and a flow check of the rerouted discharge. | Record installed locations and provide installation logs for review under the design scope. |

**Figure 1.** Fictional bids for one reported concern. The objective, exclusions and completion records show which work each bidder is pricing.

Bid A addresses runoff. Bid B proposes structural support work, contingent on a design. Ask what evidence supports the proposed objective and whether anything else needs to be investigated. If you want prices for the same scope, give both contractors the same written scope and ask for revised bids.

## What records will document the repair?

Ask what will be recorded before work starts, before it is covered and at completion. Depending on the scope, useful records might include dated photos, an installed-location sketch, product or installation records, agreed measurements, written changes and results of any specified checks. Ask whether an engineer or other party needs to see a particular stage and who will arrange that review. Denver's foundation repair checklist shows how project documents can identify inspections and observations when required. City and County of Denver, Permitting Checklist for Foundation Repairs

Ask who will provide the final records, when you will receive them and what they show about the agreed work. If the proposal includes monitoring or a warranty, ask for the follow-up schedule or written coverage and the records you would need to report a change.

## Questions for an independent review

Give an independent structural engineer both written bids, any prior reports or drawings, and the same dated observations you gave the contractors. Ask the engineer to identify what can be answered from the records and what would require a visit or further investigation.

- What condition is supported by the available evidence? Which assumptions need checking?
- Do the proposals address the same objective and area? Does either scope leave a relevant condition outside the work?
- What additional information would help decide among monitoring, further investigation or repair?
- What design information, construction observations or completion records would be appropriate for the chosen scope?

Use the worksheet to write down the gaps. Ask bidders to respond in writing so the answers can be carried into the agreed scope.

### What to do next

Need an engineer to assess the condition before you choose a scope? Read
What Happens During a Foundation Inspection?

Does a proposal specify epoxy injection? Read
What Epoxy Injection Is Used for in Concrete Repair

# Blank foundation repair bid worksheet

Date _____ Property / location _____

Decision or deadline _____

| Record | Bid A | Bid B |
|---|---|---|
| **Contractor, date and bid version** | | |
| **Condition, location and objective** | | |
| **Assumptions and work included** | | |
| **Exclusions, allowances and change triggers** | | |
| **Design, permits and restoration responsibilities** | | |
| **Total price and schedule** | | |
| **Completion checks, timing and responsible party** | | |
| **Records to receive and any follow-up** | | |
| **Open questions for the contractor or engineer** | | |

Other observations _____

**Figure 2.** Use one worksheet for two bids and add a sheet for additional bids.