Site Visits, Letters, Reports and Drawings

Start with what someone needs to decide. A buyer, contractor, or permit reviewer may ask for different information about the same property. Share the actual request and its deadline before you ask for a fee.

Who will use the deliverable?

Name the intended reader and ask what they need the engineer to address. If a buyer, lender, permitting agency, or other recipient sent a request, give the engineer the full wording and any forms or instructions. For your own decision, say whether you need to understand an observation, compare options, or move into design.

What a visit, letter, report, or drawing can provide

Service or output	What to ask	Example reader
Site visit	Which questions will the engineer investigate and which areas will be accessible?	An owner deciding whether more evaluation is needed
Letter	What focused question will the letter address and what will it record?	A buyer responding to a specific inspection concern
Report	Will it explain observations, limitations, findings, and next steps?	An owner comparing options for further work
Drawings	What design details and coordination will be included and who will use the set?	A builder pricing work or a reviewer evaluating a submission

Ask what written material, if any, comes with the visit and whether the intended recipient will accept the proposed scope. RES structural engineering FAQs

What affects timing and fees

Access, the quality of existing records, and the number of questions can change the effort. Ask whether the proposed service includes review of plans, measurements, photos, research, or a return visit. Provide the decision date and any access restrictions up front. Ask how scope and timing will change if a relevant condition is concealed.

Fictional letter excerpt

Question. Describe the visible condition of the reported crack at the east garage wall and identify what information may be needed next.

Scope and limits. The visit includes visible garage surfaces accessible on the visit date. Finishes remain in place. The scope ends with a letter describing observations and recommended follow-up. Repair design and construction visits require a separate scope.

What to confirm in the proposal

Confirm the property, question, intended recipient, included work, deliverable, and target timing. Ask what the engineer expects from you, what a follow-up or revision would include, and who will coordinate with the contractor or permitting agency. Ask whether construction observations are included if the work moves forward.

Field notes

Intended reader and decision date

Scope, deliverable, and open questions

What to do next

Ready to gather records? Read Preparing for Your First Engineering Consultation.

Scheduling checks during construction? Read Planning Inspections and Responding to a Missed Inspection.