Cactus and tree work: what to check before you agree

Print this page and keep it with you while you talk to contractors.

Contractor / company	ROC licence no.
Date of estimate	Quoted amount
General liability policy no.	Workers' comp policy no.

ASK THESE ON THE ESTIMATE

- [ ] How many of these have you moved, and can I see one you moved a year or more ago?
- [ ] Who handles the permits and tags?
- [ ] What happens if the plant dies, and what would void that?
- [ ] How much of this tree are you planning to take off, and why?
- [ ] Are sprinkler lines, lawn, or hardscape at risk, and who pays if they get damaged?
- [ ] Is cleanup included, or is that extra?

CACTUS WORK: WALK AWAY IF YOU HEAR

- [ ] Nobody marks the north side.
- [ ] They talk about lifting it by the arms.
- [ ] No talk of permits or tags.
- [ ] "Just water it a bunch when it's in."
- [ ] Nobody calls 811.
- [ ] Vague answers about the root ball.

TREE WORK: WALK AWAY IF YOU HEAR

- [ ] They offer to "top" it.
- [ ] Climbing spikes on a tree you're keeping.
- [ ] Everything on the inside gets stripped.
- [ ] They knocked on your door after a storm.
- [ ] They want it all paid up front.

INSURANCE: GET BOTH, IN WRITING

Ask for a certificate of insurance for **each** policy, sent to you directly by their insurance agent.

- [ ] "We're covered" with nothing on paper.
- [ ] "I don't have employees" from a crew of five.
- [ ] A policy that doesn't cover this kind of work.
- [ ] Limits too small for the job.

If a contractor has insurance, they don't mind showing it. Asking for proof is normal, and anyone who gets evasive about it has already answered your question.

Source: shitshowcactusandtrees.org