

10 golden rules to finding the right driveway company!

1. **Never do business at the door!**

Never ever deal with cold callers at the door with offers too good to be true, such as, "we have some tarmac left over from a job down the road", or "we are in the area for a couple of days and can offer you a one off amazing deal " 'ALARM BELLS SHOULD BE RINGING'! Chances are you will get a sub-standard job and have no way of tracing the culprits. Remember quality driveway companies are in high demand, so do your homework and if necessary wait a while for your new block paved driveway to be installed professionally.

2. **Who are you employing?**

Always get a professional, itemised written estimate/contract on a company letterhead, with a real traceable address, not a PO box or an office suite at some prestigious London address. Make sure the phone number is a landline not just a mobile, 9 times out of 10 the person who answers the phone will be the installer who carries out the driveway work. If you have different block paving contractors calling you back with cheaper estimates, be very careful this is often the same company but a different voice on the phone!

3. **Trade Associations.**

Ask if the driveway contractor belongs to a trade association like the **Marshalls Accredited Landscape Contractor**. These organisations carry out much of the hard work needed to vet a company and regularly visit the paving contractors on site to check on working standards, The Marshalls Register also lay down a strict code of conduct to which the driveway installers must work too. Check with the trade association to validate the company, often false claims of membership by rogue traders using logos and literature of trade organisations are made.

4. **Previous work for viewing.**

Try to choose a local driveway installer who has an established business and proven track record in your local area, they will be able to provide local addresses where they have installed block paved driveways over their years of trading. There is no substitute for seeing a contractor's previous work, which has been installed and put to the test for a few years.

5. **The money.**

Never pay deposits up front or in advance If the driveway company you are considering do not have the resources to start the groundwork on your driveway or patio before a stage payment is paid, the chances are they are not a credible business. If there is extra work once the job has started, get the extra costs agreed in writing. Always keep back a good

percent of the money until the end of the job when you are 100% satisfied with your new block paved driveway or patio project.

6. Public liability insurance.

Don't be afraid to ask awkward questions such as, does the driveway contractor have **Public Liability** (PL) in place, although it is not a legal obligation to have PL insurance, any reputable driveway, landscape or block paving company will be insured as a matter of course, and if they are a member of a trade association this is very often a criteria of their membership.

7. Getting the details in writing

Always get more than 1 estimate, try to obtain at least 2 or 3 equivalent estimates from experienced professional driveway companies detailing, the driveway design, what style and manufacturer of block paving will be used, does the driveway drainage comply with the 2008 planning regulations, how deep will they dig the driveway out, what sub-base is used to lay the driveway on and how will it be compacted, and the driveway costs should all be detailed, from this you should be able to make a credible decision on who will carry out your driveway or patio installation, never just go for the cheapest block paving estimate because it's the cheapest, remember if a price seems cheap, chances are you'll get a cheap job, and you will end up paying more to have the work rectified.

8. The Guarantee. The guarantee for your new driveway. Be cautious of any paving company or landscape builder who can only offer you a verbal guarantee, would you buy a new car with a verbal guarantee if it goes wrong? Real guarantees such as the **Marshalls Accredited Landscape Contractor** guarantee is insurance backed and indexed for 5 years on labour and have a 10-year material warranty, driveway guarantees don't get better than this!

9 Don't be afraid to ask questions

When the driveway installer visits your property to give you your free driveway estimate, ask some questions such as, who will actually be carrying out the paving work on your driveway installation? What experience do they have as a landscape contractor? How long will the driveway take to be installed? Will skilled paving contractors be working on your driveway project everyday? And what will the construction process of the driveway involve? Installing driveways correctly requires specialist equipment and experience, if all the driveway company turn up with is a pick axe and shovel, beware!

10 **The summary**

Take your time when choosing your driveway block paving company, if the paving contractor is vague or invasive and pressures you for a start date or isn't prepared to put in the time and effort to discuss your needs and requirements, do yourself a favour, find one who is!

You can never safeguard for every eventuality when planning your dream driveway, patio or landscape project, but by following the **10 golden rules to finding the right driveway company**, it will make your search 10 times safer.