

# Estimates and quotes

**Estimates and quotes are different ways of putting a price on a job or service before the job is done.**

## What is a quote?

A quote is the total amount a tradesperson agrees it will cost to do a job or service for you and is given to you before any work begins. Get at least three quotes to compare prices as it can save you money. Get written quotes, not verbal so you have a record of the agreed price. Quotes should be obligation free and contain the tradesperson's contact details including address, licence details, ABN and terms and conditions where possible.

Some quotes can attract a fee, so always check before getting a quote.

## Quote checklist

The quote from a tradesperson should include the following:

- description of job;
- details of any potential extra work that could cost more;
- price of materials required;
- labour charges; and
- time needed to finish the job.

When you give the go ahead you are accepting the quote. In some cases the tradesperson may write up a formal contract to outline your commitment to the quote and may include a schedule of the payments you must make.

## How to get a quote

- Know exactly what you want done and when you need it done by.
- Get at least three separate businesses to give you a written quote for the job to make sure you're getting the best deal.
- Consider the price, quality of materials and job duration of each quote.
- Pay a small deposit, no more than 10 per cent of the total price or 6.5 per cent if it is a building matter. Then make instalments as the work is done. Don't pay the total amount before the job is completed.
- Keep all paperwork – quotes, invoices, receipts.
- If your tradesperson says extra work is needed, you can choose to stop the work before it goes ahead and avoid further charges.

Before you pay a deposit, make sure you really need the goods or services and that the tradesperson is properly licensed and qualified.

## What if extra work is needed after I accept the quote?

Tradespeople must get your permission to do extra work. They can't just go ahead and tell you later. You don't have to accept the extra work. Accepting the extra work will mean extra costs. If you're unsure, get other quotes to make sure the price is fair.

If extra work is done without your permission you don't have to pay.

### For example

Following a written quote you arrange for a mechanic to replace the muffler on your car, but when you return, the mechanic has also replaced the tyres and brake pads, which cost an extra \$1200. This work was not agreed to by you, so you don't have to pay for any work other than replacing the muffler. If the mechanic asked your permission before replacing the tyres and brake pads, and you agreed, then you must pay for the extra work.

## What is an estimate?

An estimate is an educated guess on the cost of work. The final figure may be higher or lower than estimated and an estimate can vary as a job progresses. The estimate will give you an idea of potential costs. A detailed inspection would result in a quote which is a fixed price that can't be changed once you accept it.

There might be an expiry date after which the estimate or quote will no longer be valid.

Don't accept an open contract because conditions can be altered without your agreement. This is especially important if a lot of work is required.

## Your rights with estimates

Under the Australian Consumer Law, goods or service providers should use their skill and experience when estimating costs. The actual cost should not be too much more than the amount estimated. Try to provide lots of information so the tradespeople can estimate or quote accurately.

## Check for licences

Builders, mechanics, electricians and plumbers are required by law to be licensed.

If urgent work is needed ask about call out fees, because they vary. Shop around for the best price.

All electrical work at your home has to be carried out by a licensed electrician. Ask to see a valid licence before work proceeds. Check it against the list of licensed electricians at [www.energysafety.wa.gov.au](http://www.energysafety.wa.gov.au)

Plumbers are required to have a valid plumbing licence number which is often on their business card. Check it against the list of licensed plumbers at [www.buildingcommission.wa.gov.au](http://www.buildingcommission.wa.gov.au)

Examples where plumbing estimates may be needed:

- installation of appliances such as dishwashers or a gas range replaced;
- the shower or toilet is not working;
- blocked drains;
- under slab leaks and possible brick foundation repairs; or
- smelly sinks.

Plumbing costs vary. Ask for a quote or a detailed estimate.

## If things go wrong for you

If your bill is higher than the quote discuss it with the tradesperson immediately.

If you can't reach agreement, you can refuse to pay the extra amount.

Remember you should only proceed on an agreed quote. If you proceed on an estimate remember the final amount can be more than you expected. However, the final amount shouldn't exceed the estimate by much and if it does, query it immediately.

If you and the tradesperson can't come to an agreement, call Consumer Protection on one of the numbers below. We have Indigenous officers who can help you make a formal complaint.

## Contact

Contact us if you want to find out more about a specific situation or make a complaint.

Call: **1300 30 40 54**

National Relay Service: **13 36 77** for the hearing impaired

Email: [askus@dmirs.wa.gov.au](mailto:askus@dmirs.wa.gov.au)

Write to: Locked Bag 100 EAST PERTH WA 6892

 **AskUsCP**

 **@indigcp**

There is a template of letters and official complaint forms on our website [www.commerce.wa.gov.au/consumer-protection](http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/consumer-protection)