

How To Hire An Engineer To Get An Extra Bedroom

TIPS AND TRICKS TO FIND THE RIGHT ENGINEER WHO WILL FIGHT TO INCREASE PROPERTY VALUE

All Engineers are not created equal and this document is intended to help you find the “cream of the crop” as it relates to hiring the right Engineer for your job.

INFORMATION NEEDED PRIOR TO CALLING ENGINEER

Make sure that prior to calling the Engineer you are fully prepared and have done as much due diligence as possible. Remember by being informed you will have the best chance of keeping costs low because you will decrease the amount of work that the Engineer will have to perform as part of getting approval. You should have the following information prior to making the call:

1. Property survey

The Engineer, when creating their design, will have to take into consideration the proposed reserve septic system location in relation to property lines in order to meet the requirements of the Connecticut Public Health code. This information can be found by contacting the property owner or performing a search of the Town Clerk's land use records or the various land use departments which may have maps on file for the property. Surveys that have topography are an added bonus as the Engineer will have to approximate/determine the topography as part of their design process.

2. Well location of subject property and neighboring properties if they are serviced by private well.

Septic tanks, pump chambers and the actual leaching fields themselves must be a minimum of 75 feet away from any potable water source. The separation distance may be greater dependent on the withdrawal rate and if the well is utilized for a community water system. Nonetheless, by performing this research the Engineer will be ready to proceed with the design that much quicker.

3. Any previous septic plans or soils testing on subject property and neighboring properties.

This information is extremely useful because if soils testing were performed on the subject property within the past 10 years or so many times we will not have to perform additional soils testing in the field. This will lead to a direct savings that many times can be up to 50% of the cost of the total design. If soils testing was not performed on the subject property but was performed on the neighboring properties and the soils profile was consistent, an Engineer should try their hardest to use that information and not perform additional soils testing in the field.

4. Any plans that may show delineated wetlands and watercourses on subject property and into neighboring properties 50 feet.

This will assist the Engineer as they have to keep the proposed reserve area a minimum of 50 feet from any wetlands or watercourses. Specific Towns may have more stringent requirements via a Sanitary Ordinance adopted by the local municipality.



INFORMATION PROVIDED COURTESY OF:

**ARTHUR H. HOWLAND
& ASSOCIATES, P.C.**

CIVIL ENGINEERS
LAND SURVEYORS
SOIL SCIENTISTS
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QUESTIONS TO ASK THE POTENTIAL ENGINEER

1. Are you a licensed Professional Engineer in the State of Connecticut?

If they are not licensed then chances are they will not have the technical knowhow to have the best potential of increasing the value of your property by getting that extra bedroom approved.

2. Are you familiar with the Section B100A of the Connecticut Public Health Code?

If they are hesitant to answer or say no, run do not walk to the next potential Engineer.

3. What is the most challenging design they have worked on and were they successful in getting it approved.

This will help you to learn how hard the Engineer is willing to work for you. Unfortunately, some Engineers are too willing to put in a half-hearted effort and still take your money.

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5. Do they have “Errors and Omissions” insurance?

Every Engineer makes mistakes even though some won't admit it. If an Engineer has the proper insurance to protect them from liability and are willing to pay this extra premium it is typically a sign of a conscientious and responsible Engineer who is looking to protect both their and their clients interest.

6. Have they ever performed permeability testing as part of getting a septic design approved?

A permeability test is a detailed hydraulic analysis of the soils on a property. The Connecticut Public Health Code offers general design criteria based on conservative assumptions. As an Engineer you have the right to perform a more detailed examination and as such many times get a septic approved in locations the general code would not allow it. An Engineer who has performed permeability testing versus one who is not is better versed in their knowledge of the process and has a higher likelihood of getting your project approved.

7. What will be the cost?

The saying, “You get what you pay for,” is typically consistent when it comes to retaining an Engineer. No I am not saying that just because they are expensive they will get it approved, but I would hire a competent Engineer who is more expensive than one who cannot answer the hardball questions you have thrown at them.

By utilizing this document you will be better prepared to hire an Engineer who can get the job done and get it done in a cost effective and time efficient manner.

If you have any questions related to the B100a process or just general questions pertaining to your existing or proposed septic system, please contact Arthur H. Howland & Associates, P.C. at (860) 354-9346 and ask for Paul Szymanski. You can also visit us on the web at <http://ahhowland.com>.



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