



King County
Department of Development
and Environmental Services
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Selecting a Geotechnical Consultant

For alternate formats, call 206-296-6600.

The primary concern in selecting a consultant is to find one with the appropriate training and experience to address the geotechnical issues relating to your project. Although you may be concerned about the cost of the consultant's services, it is important to note that the additional cost of these services is very small compared to the potential damage that could occur to your house or property due to a geotechnical problem. Do not choose a consultant on the basis of cost alone.

All reports that require specific design recommendations or engineering analyses must be signed and stamped by a licensed professional engineer with expertise in geotechnical engineering in western Washington. A qualified engineering geologist should perform studies that require an evaluation of geological conditions as they relate to structures or potential hazards. If King County Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES) requests that you provide a geotechnical investigation, we will specify the minimum scope of work the investigation should address. During a more detailed evaluation of the site, the consultant may identify additional geotechnical issues and should address such issues in a manner consistent with applicable professional standards of care.

Geotechnical consultants may be found in the Yellow Pages or equivalent publications under the headings of "Engineers - Geotechnical - Soils" and "Geologists." Another source of information is the Consulting Engineers' Council of Washington, located in Seattle. Some of the larger firms listed in the Yellow Pages do not work on single-family residential projects but may be able to recommend qualified professionals who work regularly in that area. You may also wish to contact the Better Business Bureau in Seattle and the Washington State Department of Licensing for Engineers and Land Surveyors for further information about consultants that you are considering.

We suggest that as you contact prospective geotechnical consultants, you briefly describe your project and the items required by King County. In addition, inquire about the following:

- The consultant's educational background in geology and geotechnical engineering.
- The type of projects completed by the firm or individual.
- The consultant's geotechnical experience in western Washington.
- Some references from previous projects similar in scope to your own.
- If you are retaining an engineer, verify that he or she holds a current license to practice engineering in the State of Washington and is trained and experienced in geotechnical engineering. Engineering geologists are not currently licensed by the State of Washington.

Using these guidelines, you should be able to find a geotechnical consultant who will satisfy your needs and those of King County.

For information about the DDES [preferred consultants program](#), which includes a list of preferred geotechnical consultants, visit the DDES Web site at www.kingcounty.gov/permits. To reach DDES Critical Areas staff, call 206-296-6600.

[Customer information bulletins](#) also are available via the Department's Web site, or call DDES Customer Service at 206-296-6600 to request information by mail.

Check out the DDES Web site at www.kingcounty.gov/permits