

The Amarillo Foundation Repair Bid Checklist

What to document before you call, what a real inspection includes, and how to compare two bids that don't look alike.

Foundation repair is a purchase most people make once, under stress, with no way to judge whether \$4,000 or \$16,000 is the right number. Two companies can look at the same Panhandle house and hand you bids that differ by thousands — not because one is cheating, but because they are describing different work at different depths.

How to use it: check off each box as you go. The last pages have space to record each company's bid side by side, plus the permit offices you may need. The online version with links to every guide is at amarillofoundationrepairexperts.com/foundation-repair-bid-checklist-amarillo.

1 Before You Call Anyone

THIS WEEK, 20 MINUTES

Five minutes of documentation now makes every bid you get more accurate — and gives you a baseline to argue from later.

- ☐ **Mark and date every crack.** Pencil a line at the end of each crack and write the date next to it. Whether a crack is *growing* matters far more than how long it is, and nobody can tell you that from one visit.
- ☐ **Photograph the inside and outside.** Diagonal cracks at door and window corners, stair-step cracks in brick, gaps at trim, the garage slab, and each exterior wall.
- ☐ **Write down when you first noticed it** and whether it tracks the seasons — worse in a dry August, easier after a wet spring is the classic Panhandle pattern.
- ☐ **Check your water bill and meter.** A bill that jumped, or a meter that moves with every fixture off, points at a leak under the slab rather than soil movement. See [slab leak or foundation problem?](#)
- ☐ **Walk the drainage.** Grading that runs toward the house, downspouts dumping at a corner, a flowerbed held against the slab, or a sprinkler zone soaking one side.
- ☐ **Know what kind of foundation you have.** Concrete slab, or pier and beam with a crawl space. It changes who you should be talking to.

2 What a Real Inspection Includes

WHEN THE CONTRACTOR IS AT THE HOUSE

A sales call and an inspection look similar for the first ten minutes. These are the things that separate them.

- ☐ **Elevation readings across the floor.** A laser level or manometer survey showing where the foundation sits relative to itself, in inches. This is the single most important item on the list — **ask to see the numbers**, not a verbal summary.
- ☐ **A walk of the exterior and the drainage** not just the rooms with visible cracks.
- ☐ **Photos from the crawl space** if you have one — piers, beams, shims, moisture. Ask for them.
- ☐ **A question about plumbing.** Any contractor who doesn't ask whether an under-slab leak has been ruled out is skipping a step that could cost you the whole job twice.
- ☐ **A plain explanation of the cause** not just the fix. If nobody can tell you why the foundation moved, nobody can tell you whether it will keep moving.
- ☐ **Time.** A thorough residential evaluation takes more than fifteen minutes.

3 Every Line That Belongs in the Bid

BEFORE YOU SIGN ANYTHING

Get all of it in writing. A bid that is one number on one page cannot be compared with anything.

- ☐ **Pier count and placement** with a drawing showing where each one goes.
- ☐ **Pier type and manufacturer** — steel push, helical, or concrete pressed — and for steel, the shaft diameter. See [steel vs. concrete piers](#).
- ☐ **Depth target and refusal criterion.** How deep they expect to go and how they will know a pier is bearing. Amarillo's active clay can run 10 to 20 feet or more.
- ☐ **Interior piers: tunneled or through the slab.** Tunneling costs more and saves your flooring. The bid should say which.
- ☐ **Lift expectation, in writing.** "Maximum practical lift" is honest. A promise of perfectly level is not.
- ☐ **Before-and-after elevation documentation** included as part of the job.

- ☐ **Exclusions, spelled out.** Plumbing tests, concrete and landscaping replacement, interior drywall and paint, and door adjustments are commonly *not* included.
- ☐ **Permit.** Pier and underpinning work needs a City of Amarillo permit and the contractor should pull it — see our [permit guide](#).
- ☐ **Warranty terms** — length, what movement triggers a callback, what is excluded, and the transfer fee and deadline if you sell. See [what warranties really cover](#).
- ☐ **Payment schedule tied to completed work** rather than a large sum up front. See [financing and payment plans](#).
- ☐ **Total price, itemized** with any per-pier rate for added piers if more are needed.

4 Comparing Two Bids

AT THE KITCHEN TABLE

Put them side by side and fill in both columns. Where a row is blank on one bid, that is your next question — not a reason to assume it is included.

- ☐ **Pier count** Eight piers and fourteen piers are different jobs, not different prices.
- ☐ **Pier type and depth target** A shallower pier in the same spot is a cheaper pier that may not reach stable soil.
- ☐ **Interior access method** Tunneling vs. breaking the slab inside.
- ☐ **What is excluded** The most common source of a "surprise" bill.
- ☐ **Warranty length and transferability** A lifetime warranty from a company three years old is worth less than it sounds.
- ☐ **Permit included?** If one bid skips the permit, it is not the same job.
- ☐ **Who does the elevation survey, and when** Before and after, or only before?

5 Red Flags

ANY TIME

None of these alone proves bad faith. Two or more together is a reason to get another bid.

- ☐ **A knock at the door** offering a free inspection you didn't request — especially after a storm. Our [red flags guide](#) covers the rest.
- ☐ **"Today only" pricing.** Foundations move over years. A discount that expires tonight is a sales tactic, not an engineering finding.
- ☐ **A large deposit before work starts.** A modest deposit tied to a written contract is normal; most of the money up front is not.
- ☐ **Refusal to show elevation readings** or to explain the cause of the movement.
- ☐ **Suggesting the permit can be skipped.** That tells you how the rest of the job will go — and it surfaces when you sell.
- ☐ **Pressure to sign before you get a second bid.** A sound foundation plan is still sound next week.

6 Before Work Starts, and After It Ends

SIGNING DAY THROUGH FINAL WALKTHROUGH

The last few items are the ones that protect you years later, when you sell.

- ☐ **Confirm the permit was pulled** before the crew arrives. City of Amarillo Building Safety will confirm over the phone.
- ☐ **Photograph the house before work begins** — interior walls, exterior brick, landscaping, driveway.
- ☐ **Hold back payment** until the work is complete and any inspection has passed. Texas lien law also expects owners to retain 10% of the contract price for 30 days after completion as protection against unpaid subcontractors.
- ☐ **Get the final elevation readings** in writing, with the pier layout drawing.
- ☐ **Get the warranty document itself** — not a line in the contract that mentions one.
- ☐ **File all of it together.** Texas requires sellers to disclose previous foundation repair, and a documented, warranted, permitted repair reads very differently to a buyer than an undocumented one. See [disclosing foundation repair when you sell](#).

Record Each Bid Here

Print one copy of this page per company. Two bids blur together fast, and the differences are what you are actually choosing between.

Company name

Contact name and phone

Date of inspection

Pier type and manufacturer

Number of piers quoted

Depth target

Interior piers: tunneled or through slab?

Elevation difference found (inches)

Total price quoted

What is excluded

Warranty length

Warranty transfer fee / deadline

Permit pulled by (company / date)

Permit number

Work start and finish dates

Final elevation reading

Permit Offices and Numbers Worth Saving

City of Amarillo Building Safety (permits)	806-378-3041
City of Canyon Permits & Inspections	(806) 655-5034
City of Hereford Building & Zoning	(806) 363-7100
City of Pampa Building Department	(806) 669-5740
Amarillo Foundation Repair Experts	(806) 459-3459

Getting bids, or just want a second opinion?

Call or Text (806) 459-3459

Tell us what you're seeing, and we'll connect you with a local foundation repair pro who can take elevation readings and give you a written, itemized bid. Free to use, no obligation.

amarillofoundationrepairexperts.com

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