

Tips for Hiring an Environmental Consultant

Many businesses question how they are affected by air regulations and what they must do to comply. An environmental consultant can help you understand state, local, and federal pollution control requirements. Consultants may also help you estimate emissions, complete air permit applications, or develop permitting strategies. It is the consultant's job to answer your questions and provide cost-efficient solutions.

Where to Find an Environmental Consultant

If you decide to seek the services of an environmental consultant, where do you find one?

- ✓ **Network with other businesses like yours.** Find out who has used a consultant. Ask for the consultant's contact information. Did the consultant do a good job? Would the person use them again?
- ✓ **Contact your trade association,** Chamber of Commerce, or the Better Business Bureau.
- ✓ **Look in the Yellow Pages** under consultants, attorneys (some lawyers specialize in environmental law and offer consulting services), or environmental services.
- ✓ **Do online searches** through sites such as Google, Bing, etc. ADEQ may have similar facility permit information online:
<http://www.adeq.state.ar.us/home/pdssql/pds.asp> .
- ✓ **Contact several consultants** and request a project proposal including qualifications, references, scope of services, and fees to complete the project. Remember, you are putting your business into the consultant's hands. Look for a reputable environmental consultant you feel comfortable with and can trust.

ADEQ: What We Do

The Department of Environmental Quality is an agency of the state of Arkansas. We are headquartered in North Little Rock and have offices and inspectors throughout the state.

Our regulatory Offices of Air Quality, Water Quality, and Land Resources help protect Arkansas' environment. We issue operating permits for businesses and farms and monitor for compliance.

We also manage many programs to assist businesses, educators, and the public with regulatory, recycling and other issues. ADEQ offers loans and tax credits for environmental improvement projects.

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What to Look for in an Environmental Consultant

While the cost of a consultant is an important concern, the least expensive consultant may not always offer the best value or be right for your business. This is especially true as the number of environmental regulations affecting small businesses increases. Consultants may not have direct experience or specific training in the area your business needs.

When Choosing a Consultant:

Consider Compatibility

- ✓ Has the consultant worked with your type of business before?
- ✓ Do they provide Environmental Consulting and Environmental Engineering services?
- ✓ Some regulations and deadlines vary from county to county. Does the consultant have experience in your county?
- ✓ Does the consultant have experience with your types of pollutants or your specific area of concern?
- ✓ Can the consultant communicate with you in a clear manner?

Consider Credibility

- ✓ What kind of reputation does the consultant have?
- ✓ Does the consultant have solid references?
- ✓ Does the consultant have experience with Arkansas's regulatory agencies?
- ✓ How many years has the consultant been in business?
- ✓ Does the consultant belong to any professional associations?
- ✓ What type of training, certifications, licenses, and/or registration does the consultant have? What is the consultant's background?

Consider Cost-Effectiveness

- ✓ Are the consultant's fees in your price range?
- ✓ Do you understand what you're paying for?
- ✓ Can you get assistance from some other source?
- ✓ Has the consultant provided a detailed scope of services? Is the scope of work complete?
- ✓ If the ADEQ needs more information after the permit application has been prepared, will it cost more money for the consultant to provide it?

Questions to Ask an Environmental Consultant

Call several consultants. Don't hesitate to ask questions. Talk to the person with whom you'll be working, not to a marketing or sales person. Ask the same questions of every consultant. Basic questions could include:



1. What kind of training, experience, education or certification does your firm have?
2. Have you helped businesses similar to mine in the past? How many? How long ago?
3. Have you helped other businesses in this area (i.e., permitting, emission control)?
4. Have you worked in this media (water, air, solid or hazardous waste, etc)?
5. Can I get a list of references from you relative to my proposed project?
6. What are your contract terms and provisions?
7. If the ADEQ needs more information after the permit application has been prepared, will it cost more money for the consultant to provide it?
8. How long will it take to complete this work?
9. Will you do a site visit of my business?
10. How many visits to my business will you require?
11. What guarantee will you give me to ensure that your services will be accurate and adequate to bring my business into compliance?
12. Do you have professional liability insurance? If yes, does it cover pollution-related claims? Who is the insurer?
13. Does your firm have a certified lab to handle stack/effluent/soil testing samples?
14. Does your firm have the ability to conduct air dispersion modeling, if required?
15. How much of my time will you require? What responsibilities will be required of me?
16. Who will be assigned to my project? Will more than one person work on my project? Who will review the final draft before submittal to ADEQ?
17. What are his/her/their credentials? Do those people work in this state or are they located in another state?

Establishing a Contract with an Environmental Consultant

A contract between you and the consultant may be a formal detailed document or a simple letter of agreement. Either way, all agreements must be in writing! Contracts should specify who will do what, how tasks will be done, and when work will be completed. Determine in advance how any follow-up requests for information will be handled. Be sure that both parties sign the contract.

Some other considerations when preparing a contract:

- Spell out the exact nature of the work expected.
- Clearly state the method of determining fees for services and any anticipated expenses, (i.e., hourly compensation, certain standard prices for a particular service, etc.).
- Clearly state the method and schedule for payment (one lump sum, several payments over time).
- Ask questions if you do not understand any part of the contract.
- Ask whether requests for follow-up information will result in any charges.
- Determine if insurance requirements should be included (might include Commercial General Liability (CGL), Workers Compensation and Professional Liability insurance).
- Ask for written proposals outlining tasks, timelines, estimated fees and work products to be delivered.
- Review each firm's written proposal carefully. Compare proposals - tasks should be consistent. Be sure the firms propose to provide the duties you need.



Do You Need A Professional Engineer or Geologist?

Some projects require a professional engineer or professional geologist. In order to safeguard life, health and property and to promote the public welfare, the practice of engineering in the State of Arkansas is subject to regulation. The term “professional engineer” shall mean a person who has been duly licensed as a Professional Engineer by the Arkansas State Board of Licensure. A professional engineer can be found much the same way a consultant is, but the Arkansas State Board of Licensure (www.pels.arkansas.gov) can inform you if an individual or firm has received complaints.

Similarly, a professional geologist may be required to certify reports and facility design, conduct groundwater monitoring, sampling and analysis just to name a few. A professional geologist must be certified by the Arkansas State Board for Professional Geologists.