



Quotes and estimates

Getting quotes and estimates: the basics



Find out how much a job will cost before you agree to it by asking for a quote or an estimate. Get all the information in writing just in case there are problems later on.

An estimate is how much the seller thinks the job will cost. The actual price may be more or less, but it shouldn't be too much more.

A quote is an offer to do a job for an exact price. If you accept the quote then the seller can't charge you more than the agreed price. It is best to get the quote in writing in case there are any problems later.

Before you buy, get a quote or estimate

Decide exactly what you want done and when you need it done by and get a written quote or estimate.

Estimates are good for finding out roughly how much you will have to pay. The seller should use their skill and experience when estimating the cost.

A quote is an offer to do a job for an exact price. If you accept the quote then the seller can't charge you more than the agreed price. It is best to get the quote in writing in case there are any problems later.

What should a quote include?

The quote should show:

- what work is to be done
- start and finish dates
- hourly rate
- cost of material
- whether the total price includes GST.

Since the cost of materials and hourly rates changes over time the quote will probably give a date you have to decide by.

It takes time to provide a quote, so the seller may charge you a small fee for the quote. Ask them about this beforehand.

How to get a quote

- Decide exactly what you want done and when you need it done by.
- Contact at least three sellers give them the same information and ask for a written quote.
- Decide which quote you will accept. Look at the price, quality of materials and how long the job will take.
- Tell the successful seller they have the job. You don't have to tell the other sellers who you chose or why.
- Try not to pay a deposit, especially a large deposit, and definitely don't pay the total amount before the job is finished.
- Keep all the paperwork – quotes, invoices, receipts.
- Use the same process for an estimate but remember that the actual price may be more or less. Get a written agreement that the seller will contact you if the final price is going to be higher than the estimate. Then you can choose to stop the work before it gets too expensive.

If you don't understand a quote or estimate, visit your local Citizens Advice Bureau or contact them on 0800-367-222.

[Find your nearest Citizens Advice Bureau.](#)

Your rights with quotes and estimates

A quote is a contract between you and the seller. The seller should use their skill and experience when giving an estimate.

Your rights with estimates

Under the Consumer Guarantees Act, the seller should use their skill and experience when estimating the cost. The actual cost should not be too much more than the amount estimated.

Your rights with quotes

A quote is a contract between you and the seller. You and the seller must both do what you have agreed to do in the contract. That's why it's best to have it in writing.

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

The seller must get your permission to carry out extra work. You can choose to accept or refuse the extra work that they suggest. If you do accept the extra work you will probably have to pay more. Find out how much the extra work will cost before you agree. Contact other sellers in the industry to find out if the price is fair.

Got a problem with a quote or estimate?

What you can do if the trader asks for more money, doesn't finish the job or you didn't get a quote or estimate? What if the seller sends me a bill for more than the quoted amount?

The quote is a contract between you and the seller. You don't have to pay more than the quoted amount. You can send the seller only the amount quoted with a note to explain why. You may want to add 'banking this payment will be considered full and final settlement of the bill'.

If the seller has possession of your goods and you can't agree on a fair price, then it might be best to pay the full amount to take the goods away. You can go to the Disputes Tribunal to try to get the extra money back later.

[See here for information on the Disputes Tribunal.](#)

What if I didn't get a quote or estimate?

Under the Consumer Guarantees Act the seller must complete the work with reasonable skill and care, and within a reasonable time and at a reasonable price. You can find out what is reasonable by asking other sellers how much the work should cost, and how long it should take.

What if the seller doesn't complete the project, or hasn't done a good job?

Try to sort out the problem with the trader first. If it is fixable, then you need to give the tradesperson a chance to fix it at no cost to you.

If it's a serious problem, or one that can't be fixed, you can cancel the work and refuse to pay, or arrange with the tradesperson to pay a lower price.

Use the same process for an estimate but remember that the actual price may be more or less. Get a written agreement that the seller will contact you if the final price is going to be higher than the estimate. Then you can choose to stop the work before it gets too expensive.