



SEQUOIA OUTDOOR
DESIGN & BUILD

2026 EDITION

SAN MATEO & SANTA CLARA COUNTIES

HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE

Contractor Due Diligence Checklist

Most contractors hope you don't ask the
hard questions.

FILL THIS IN AS YOU INTERVIEW

The scorecard

Our answers are already filled in. Ask the same 33 questions of every other bid and write their answers in the blank columns. The gaps will speak for themselves.

33 questions worth asking every contractor you interview

5 categories where projects most often go wrong

2 blank columns to score the other bids yourself

WHAT IS IN HERE

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01 / HOW YOUR PROJECT IS RUN

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Dedicated multi-layer support team	Yes, 5 contacts		
Formally trained designers	Yes, all degreed		
Dedicated project manager	Yes		
Documented subsurface installation proof	Yes		
Jobsite safety & compliance program	Yes		
Daily documentation & progress tracking	Yes		
Live project tracking portal	Yes, exclusive		

02 / SCOPE, PRICE AND SCHEDULE

PAGE 8

Detailed scopes & fixed pricing	Yes		
Written change order policy	Yes		
Written schedule & timeline	Yes		
Written on-time completion guarantee	Yes, exclusive		

03 / INSURANCE AND LIABILITY

PAGE 10

General liability insurance	\$1M / \$2M		
Umbrella / excess liability	\$5M		
Workers' compensation insurance	Yes		
Commercial auto liability	\$1M		
Professional errors & omissions (E&O)	\$1M		
Subcontractor insurance certificates	Yes, all subs		

04 / LICENSING AND VETTING

PAGE 12

CSLB license status	Active, #1099847		
Class A, general engineering	Held		
C-27, landscaping	Held		
C-8, concrete	Held		
D-06, concrete-related services	Held		
D-12, synthetic products	Held		
Subcontractors licensed for their trade	Yes, all subs		
HIS license (sales representative)	Yes		
Employee background checks	Federal & state		

05 / TRACK RECORD AND STABILITY

PAGE 16

Founders' proven operating system	17+ years		
Crew experience	35+ years		
Completed installations	150+ local builds		
Third-party certifications	CMHA & BBB A+		
Verified company reviews	5-star, verified		
Company financial health	A+, debt-free		
Installation warranty	2 years, by scope		

The pages that follow explain what each line means, and why it protects you. Ask any contractor to show documentation for their answers. A company that operates this way will have it ready.

How your project is run

7 ITEMS

Who is accountable, who is actually on site, and how you know what happened on the days you weren't there.

01

Dedicated multi-layer support team

YES, 5 CONTACTS

We provide a structured, multi-layer support system, far beyond the one-person contact most contractors offer. Your project includes five dedicated points of contact and oversight: your degreed Senior Designer, your Project Manager, our Lead Sr. Designer, our Sr. Office Manager, and our General Manager. If one team member is unavailable, another steps in instantly. Your project never goes on pause, communication never breaks down, and you are never left wondering what's happening or who to call.

02

Formally trained designers

YES, ALL DEGREED

Every Sr. Designer at Sequoia holds a degree in Landscape Design or Landscape Architecture. That coursework is site engineering and grading, soil science, plant materials and plant communities, hardscape materials and construction detailing, irrigation design, and construction documents a crew can actually build from. It is why a trained designer knows which paver, wall block, and wood tone hold together in full sun, which plants will thrive in this climate and your soil rather than just look good at the nursery, and where water will go before a yard of soil is cut. At most companies, the person designing your yard is a commissioned sales representative with no formal training in any of it. That plan looks convincing in the meeting, and the problems surface later in the field, where changes are expensive. Ask any contractor what their designer studied and where.

03

**Dedicated
project manager**

YES

We assign a dedicated project manager to every job. They oversee each phase, coordinate crews and subs, enforce CMHA standards, ensure code and permit compliance, and verify that every detail matches your approved design, with no deviations, shortcuts, or unexplained changes in the field. Our PMs also run a proprietary **100-Point Quality Assurance Checklist**, something almost no contractor in San Mateo or Santa Clara County uses. It requires photo and video documentation at every critical stage (base prep, compaction, drainage, utilities, layout, and finishing) before the project can move forward. Critical steps are never skipped or rushed, even when you're not on site.

04

**Documented subsurface
installation proof**

YES

The most important structural elements of your project are buried underground. We document every critical subsurface phase with before, during, and after photos and video: base prep, compaction, drainage systems, utilities, edge restraints, wall footings, and more. If a problem ever arises, we can show exactly what was installed and how, protecting you from blame, liability, and costly repairs down the road. We pioneered this approach in the San Mateo and Santa Clara market, and while a few competitors attempt to imitate it, none match our consistency or standards.

05

**Jobsite safety &
compliance program**

YES

We follow a structured jobsite safety and compliance program modeled after commercial construction standards, which almost no residential contractor does: daily site walk-throughs, utility verification, trench and gas-line compliance checks, equipment safety protocols, and clear expectations for every crew on site. We monitor jobsite conditions, reinforce safety expectations, and address issues proactively, reducing risk, preventing accidents, and protecting your home.

06

Daily documentation & progress tracking

YES

We document every day of your project with jobsite photos, notes, and progress updates logged directly into your project portal. You always know exactly what was done, what's happening next, and who is on site. That record feeds your Live Project Tracking Portal and stands as proof long after the crew has gone.

07

Live project tracking portal

SEQUOIA EXCLUSIVE

We are the only contractor in Northern California that provides clients with a live project tracking portal. Through our proprietary system you can view schedules, progress updates, photos, phase completions, and upcoming milestones in real time. No guesswork, no chasing anyone for updates, and no wondering what happened on your property while you were at work.

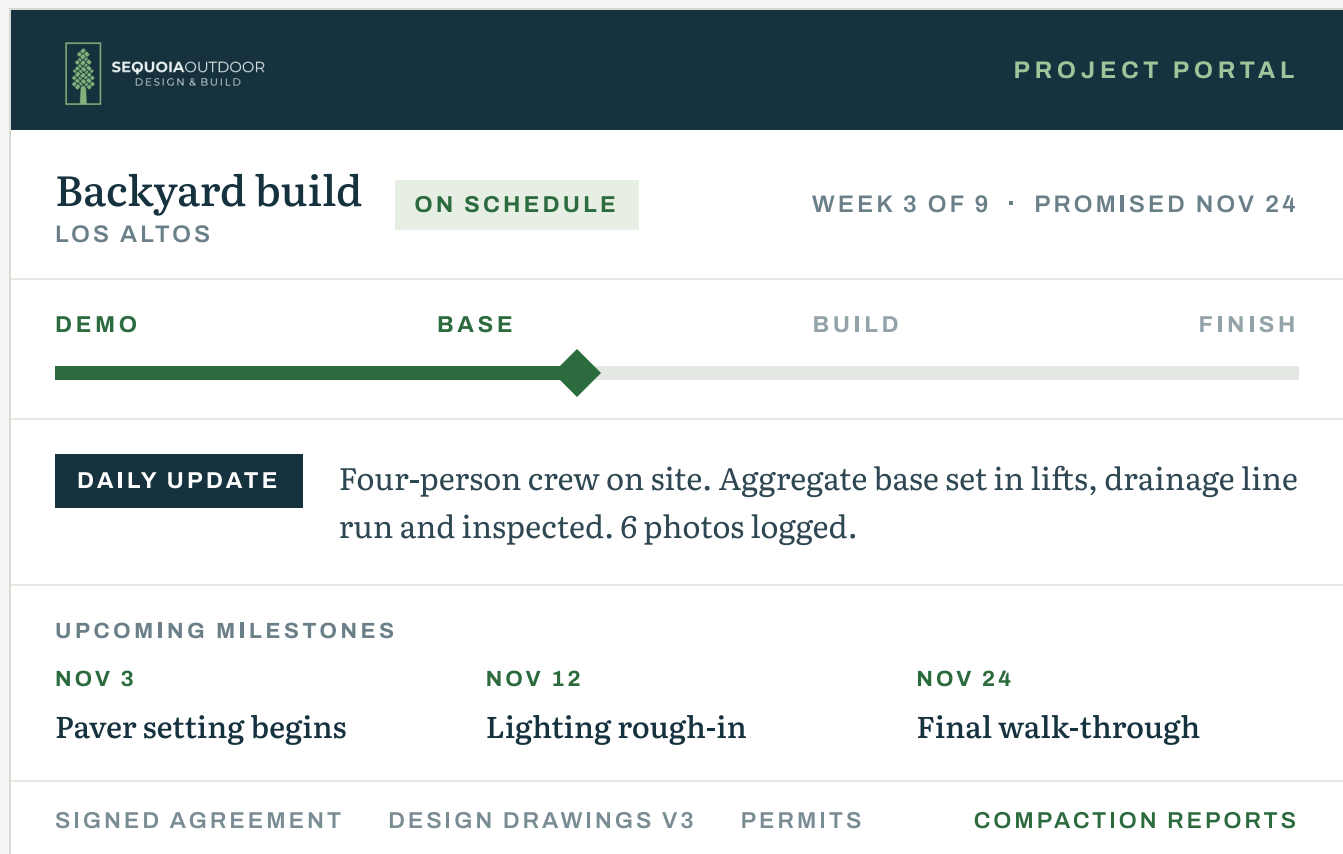


FIGURE · YOUR PORTAL, LIVE FROM THE PRE-CONSTRUCTION WALK ONWARD

Exactly what you are buying, exactly what it costs, and exactly when it will be finished, in writing, before work starts.

08

**Detailed scopes
& fixed pricing**

YES

We provide detailed, line-item scopes with fixed pricing: no vague allowances, no hidden line items, and no surprise charges halfway through your project. You always know exactly what is included, what it costs, and what will be delivered. The low quote that grows after signing is one of the oldest tactics in the trade. A fixed line-item scope makes it impossible.

09

**Written change
order policy**

YES

Any requested addition or adjustment is documented in writing with pricing confirmed before work proceeds. No surprise charges, no verbal agreements, no mid-project cost traps. Vague or inflated change orders are among the most common ways a job climbs past its price after construction starts. Ours cannot move without your signature.

10

**Written schedule
& timeline**

YES

We provide a written schedule outlining each phase of your project: start date, duration of each scope item, major milestones, and expected completion. Most contractors work without a real schedule, which leads to delays, excuses, and poor coordination. Ours turns the timeline into something you can hold us to.

Written on-time completion guarantee

SEQUOIA EXCLUSIVE

We offer the only written On-Time Completion Guarantee in San Mateo & Santa Clara County. If we miss our agreed completion window, we compensate you until the project is finished. Open-ended delay is what happens when a contractor juggles too many jobs or works without a real schedule. Here, the cost of it is ours, not yours.



SEQUOIA OUTDOOR
DESIGN & BUILD

SCHEDULE CERTIFICATE

Commencement to completion



COMMENCEMENT

Mon, Sep 14

GUARANTEED COMPLETION

Fri, Oct 30



Both dates are set at your pre-construction walk, once permits, selections and locates clear, and written into your agreement.

35 WORKING DAYS

FIGURE · EXAMPLE CERTIFICATE. YOUR DATES AND DURATION ARE SET AT THE WALK

Who pays when something goes wrong on your property. If the contractor is underinsured, the answer is usually you.

 8/1/2026 - 8/1/2027 COVERAGE SUMMARY	
Commercial general liability	\$1,000,000 occurrence · \$2,000,000 aggregate
Umbrella / excess liability	\$5,000,000
Workers' compensation & employers' liability	Statutory · E.L. \$1,000,000
Commercial auto liability	\$1,000,000 owned, hired & non-owned
Professional errors & omissions	\$1,000,000
Subcontractor certificates	On file for every sub on your job
CERTIFICATE Placed through IOA Insurance Services with Massachusetts Bay, Allmerica Financial Benefit, The Hanover American and Lloyd's. A full ACORD 25 certificate naming you as certificate holder is issued before work begins.	

12

General liability insurance

\$1M / \$2M

We carry Commercial General Liability insurance with limits of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 general aggregate. Accidental property damage or injury on your job site is covered by our policy, not your homeowner's insurance. You're welcome to request a copy of our certificate at any time.

13

Umbrella / excess liability insurance

\$5,000,000

We carry a \$5,000,000 Umbrella (Excess Liability) policy that sits above our General Liability and Auto policies for severe, high-dollar claims. This is the coverage high-net-worth homeowners should demand: serious injuries, major property loss, or multi-party incidents can exceed base limits quickly. **Most residential contractors do not carry an umbrella; we do.** It keeps you from being exposed if something rare but catastrophic occurs.

14

Workers' compensation insurance

YES

We carry full workers' compensation insurance, which protects you if anyone on our team is injured while working on your property. Their medical bills and lost wages are covered by our policy, not by you and not by your homeowner's insurance. Your exposure is removed, and our crew works knowing they are covered.

15

Commercial auto liability insurance

\$1,000,000

We carry \$1,000,000 in Commercial Auto Liability coverage, including owned, hired, and non-owned vehicles. Coverage follows any vehicle used for your project, whether a company truck, a rental, or an employee's own car, for damage to driveways and gates or accidents near your home. Many contractors skip this or rely on personal auto policies, which can lead to denied claims, finger-pointing, and delays.

16

Professional errors & omissions insurance

YES

We carry Professional Errors & Omissions (E&O) insurance, which protects you if there is a mistake in the design, planning, or administrative side of your project. If an oversight or error leads to financial loss, our policy covers it, including legal defense if needed. This coverage is uncommon in our industry and adds real protection on complex, design-driven projects.

17

Subcontractor insurance

YES, ALL SUBS

All subcontractors we use carry their own active liability and workers' compensation insurance. The subcontractor performing the work is the first party responsible if an accident, injury, or property damage occurs. **If a subcontractor is uninsured, the liability can fall back on you, even if they were at fault.** We provide insurance certificates for every subcontractor we use, and you're always welcome to request verification.

What the State of California has independently verified, and who we allow onto your property.

CSLB LICENSE

#1099847

Active & in good standing

A

C-27

C-8

D-06

D-12

Five classifications covering every phase of an outdoor living build.

18

License status

ACTIVE, #1099847

Hiring a licensed contractor isn't a technicality. It is your legal and financial protection. An active CSLB license gives you four safeguards. **Verified competence:** the contractor has passed state exams and met experience requirements. **Financial protection:** licensed contractors must carry a bond, which can compensate you if a contractor abandons a project, performs negligent work, or violates state law. **Enforcement and recourse:** the CSLB provides mediation, complaint handling, and enforcement, none of which exist with an unlicensed contractor. **Legal compliance:** in California, hiring an unlicensed contractor for work over \$500 is illegal and exposes you to liability for injuries, damages, and unpaid wages.

19

**Classification A,
general engineering**

HELD

Class A is the classification California requires for "fixed works requiring specialized engineering knowledge and skill." The statute groups bridges, dams, highways, tunnels, levees, and flood control alongside drainage, irrigation, grading, earthmoving, excavation, trenching, and paving. This is infrastructure licensing. The same classification a contractor needs to build a bridge like the Golden Gate is the one that governs what goes in under your patio. Very few residential landscape companies hold it, because most are never asked to prove they can engineer below grade, and that is precisely where high-end outdoor projects succeed or fail. Grading and drainage have to be right before any hardscape or structure goes in.

20

**Classification
C-27, landscaping**

HELD

The C-27 Landscaping Contractor license is the required CSLB classification for landscape construction in California. It confirms we are legally qualified to perform the full scope of outdoor living work (grading, drainage, irrigation, hardscape, planting, and landscape construction) and that we meet the state's standards for experience, competency, and code compliance.

2 1

**Classification
C-8, concrete**

HELD

The C-8 Concrete Contractor license covers forming, pouring, placing, finishing, and installing concrete flatwork, slabs and pads, curbs, and other concrete components. Concrete is permanent, structural, and expensive to fix if it's done wrong. This classification helps ensure your concrete scope is performed by a properly licensed contractor, protecting you from unlicensed work, failed inspections, and long-term performance issues.

2 2

**Classification D-06,
concrete-related services**

HELD

The D-06 Concrete-Related Services license is a specialized CSLB classification confirming the expertise to perform concrete installations such as foundations, footings, slabs, pads, block work, and other structural or hardscape components that support your outdoor living space. It ensures those elements are installed correctly, safely, and to California building standards, which is critical for long-term stability.

2 3

**Classification D-12,
synthetic products**

HELD

The D-12 Synthetic Products license is required for installing artificial turf and other synthetic surfacing materials. It confirms the training and expertise to install turf systems correctly (base preparation, grading, drainage, seams, infill, and edging) so your turf drains properly, looks natural, and performs for years without premature wear or failure.

24

Subcontractor licensing

YES, ALL SUBS

All subcontractors we use are properly licensed for the specific trades they perform. California requires licensed professionals for grading, electrical, plumbing, gas, concrete, and other specialized scopes. Using licensed subcontractors protects you from liability, prevents voided warranties, and ensures work meets state code and inspection standards. We are always happy to provide proof of licensing and insurance for every subcontractor.

25

HIS license

YES

In California, any representative who meets with you, discusses your project, or presents a contract must hold a valid Home Improvement Salesperson (HIS) license. It confirms the individual is registered with the CSLB, has passed a background check, and is legally authorized to negotiate and sign home improvement agreements. Working with an unlicensed salesperson is a violation of state law. Always ask for the representative's HIS license number. We're happy to provide ours at any time.

26

Employee background checks

FEDERAL & STATE

We require federal and state background checks for every employee before they are hired. This screening verifies identity, reviews criminal history, and confirms that only trustworthy, vetted individuals are allowed on your property. Your safety and the security of your home are non-negotiable, and our hiring standards reflect that.

Whether the company will still be standing, and solvent, when you need it to honor its word.

27

Founders' proven
operating system

17+ YEARS

Sequoia was founded in 2022, but the operating system used to plan, manage, and build projects was developed and refined over 17+ years of real-world production experience in California. **What protects you isn't how long a company has existed. It is the systems behind the work.** Our process emphasizes written schedules, detailed scopes, documented subsurface installation proof, defined QA checkpoints, and clear accountability at every phase. Sequoia was built from day one to operate like a mature, process-driven contractor, not a startup learning on your project.

28

Crew experience

35+ YEARS
COMBINED

Our installation crews bring 35+ years of combined, hands-on experience in outdoor living construction. They've mastered the technical details that determine whether a project lasts: base prep, grading, drainage, compaction, edge restraints, and precision layout. Experienced crews don't figure it out as they go. They install it correctly the first time and identify issues before they become problems.

Completed installations

150+ BUILT

We've built more than 150 outdoor living installations, nearly all of them inside San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. We have already worked the soil conditions, slopes, and drainage patterns found here, so your project is planned from ground we know rather than assumptions made on paper. Every build then runs through a documented system (QA checkpoints, subsurface photo and video proof, written scheduling), so the result stays consistent instead of depending on who shows up that day.

Special certifications

CMHA & BBB A+

Two third-party credentials validate quality, professionalism, and accountability. **CMHA** (Concrete Masonry & Hardscapes Association, formerly ICPI) is the industry's leading certification for paver installation excellence. It confirms our team is trained to the highest standards for base preparation, grading, compaction, edge restraints, jointing, and long-term system performance. **BBB A+** accreditation reflects years of consistent, ethical business practices, transparent communication, and outstanding client satisfaction. Combined, they show your project is handled by a company committed to technical precision and long-term durability.

Company reviews

VERIFIED 5-STAR

We'll provide direct links to our verified reviews so you can read real customer feedback and confirm consistency in communication, cleanliness, workmanship, and follow-through. If a contractor can't easily point you to verified reviews, or only shows cherry-picked screenshots, that's a red flag.

3 2

Company financial health

**EXCELLENT (A+),
DEBT-FREE**

We operate as a debt-free company. We purchase materials upfront or in real time, pay our crews weekly, and do not rely on loans, credit float, or vendor financing to run our projects. Projects don't get delayed or abandoned because a contractor can't afford materials or labor. There's no cost-cutting behind the scenes: no cheap crews, no inferior materials, no reduced supervision. Your deposit is used on your project, not to cover shortfalls on someone else's job. And your warranty is meaningful because the company remains stable and capable of honoring it. **Financial instability is what most often drives contractors to abandon projects, cut corners, or disappear.**

3 3

Installation warranty

**2 YEARS ON MOST
SCOPE**

Our warranty is written per scope of work rather than as one blanket number, with the full terms in Exhibit A of your Home Improvement Contract. Most of what we build carries two years.

2 YEARS

Interlocking pavers, porcelain pavers, walls, drainage, lighting, turf

1 YEAR

Natural stone, concrete, masonry, irrigation, pergolas, fire features, BBQ and appliances, decomposed granite

PLANTING

Plant health depends on watering and maintenance after installation, so planting is not covered by default. Coverage is available when purchased in writing.

Some companies advertise 25- and 30-year installation warranties layered with exclusions that make them unusable in practice. Specific terms you can read before you sign are worth more than a long number.

Coverage begins at the Certificate of Completion, extends to the original owner, and requires the project to be paid in full.

Before you hire anyone, ask yourself: which of these risks am I willing to take on my home?

These are the reasons homeowners get burned, and why most regret choosing the cheapest bid. When you see how much can go wrong, it becomes obvious why choosing the right contractor matters more than choosing the lowest price.

Red flags to watch for

Ten answers that should stop a conversation. Each one has a direct cost, and it is almost always paid by the homeowner.

01	No E&O, auto, or umbrella coverage	Most carry only the minimum. The gaps land on you.
02	Vague scopes or allowances	Hidden cost traps.
03	No documented subsurface work	The most important parts go unseen.
04	No licensed subcontractors	Illegal and risky.
05	No jobsite supervision	Crews left unsupervised cut corners.
06	No dedicated project manager	One overloaded contact, not a support team. They send whoever is available.
07	No written schedule	Delays and excuses.
08	No financial stability	Contractors often use your deposit to finish someone else's job.
09	Sales reps, not trained designers	Untrained in plants, materials, or drainage.
10	No history of honoring warranties	A warranty is worthless if the company won't be there to back it.

AFTER EACH INTERVIEW

Notes

What each contractor said, and what they could not show you.

SEQUOIA

BID #1

BID #2

HOWEVER YOU CHOOSE

Even if you do not choose us, please use this checklist with every contractor you interview. Skipping due diligence is the #1 cause of project delays, cost overruns, poor workmanship, and contractor disputes. The wrong choice can cost far more than the lowest bid. **The right due diligence protects your home, your money, and your time.**



SEQUOIA OUTDOOR
DESIGN & BUILD

LICENSE
#1099847

CLASSIFICATIONS
A · C-27 · C-8 · D-06 · D-12

SERVING
San Mateo & Santa
Clara Counties