

Questions to ask before a dock or lift quote

Use a clear question list to expose missing scope and reduce contract disputes.

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Bring the same brief to each supplier. Keep answers in a shared comparison sheet. Record who answered and when. An unanswered question is a task to resolve, not an assumed inclusion.

Site and access

Ask: What water levels and exposure will govern the design? Who measures depth and checks the bed? What equipment must cross the property? Is removal of the old structure included? Who repairs lawns, fences and access surfaces after work?

Ask how the proposal deals with ice, flood debris, wake and corrosion where those conditions apply. The answer must be specific to the site. A claim that a product is suitable everywhere is not useful design evidence.

Lift and boat compatibility

Give the supplier the boat builder's weight information. Identify fuel, water, engines and fitted equipment. Ask who confirms the loaded weight, hull contact points, centre of gravity and clearance. Require a named lift model and a written compatibility statement. ShoreStation and ShoreMaster sell lift systems; their product names alone do not prove compatibility with your boat.

Permission and responsibility

Who confirms ownership of the bed and shore? Who submits each application? Who pays if the authority requires a changed layout? Is the quote conditional on approval? Ask the local authority directly if the contractor's answer is unclear. The MMO guidance provides an example of marine permission that can sit outside a normal building discussion.

Contract and support

Which drawing is priced? What is excluded? When can the price change? Who supplies power, lighting and isolation? Who carries risk before handover? What must you do to preserve the warranty?

Ask for a written inspection and service plan. Identify a contact for urgent faults. Do not accept verbal promises about capacity, completion or permit approval as part of the scope.

Sources

- [ShoreStation, manufacturer website](#). Public page fetched 2026-10-29. Publication date not stated unless shown on the page.
- [ShoreMaster, Docks, Boat Lifts & Waterfront Systems](#). Public page fetched 2026-10-29. Publication date not stated unless shown on the page.
- [Marine Management Organisation, Get permission for marine work](#). Public page fetched 2026-10-29. Publication date not stated unless shown on the page.

Frequently asked questions

What should I send a boat lift dealer?

Send documented loaded weight, hull details, boat dimensions, water conditions and the proposed location. Ask what else the dealer needs.