



Evaluating and Selecting The Proper Contractor

An opinion paper provided by the UtiliSite Council

The contractors we hire in our industry must have an array of skills and a broad knowledge base to perform the work needed to develop and deploy successful installations of wireless infrastructure. This is true whether we are doing collocations on utility infrastructure or new builds.

There is absolutely nothing more important that insuring all work is done safely with no harm to employees, contractors or the public. We in the utility industry have additional responsibilities our contractors must accept. Contractors we hire must accept the responsibility that nothing they do can create an unexpected interruption in the service we provide our customers.

Acknowledging that safety and reliability are primary concerns we know the nature of our industries present risk that must be managed. Work is performed in environments that put workers at risk; heights, proximity to distribution and transmission voltage, in the path of RF, adverse weather conditions. ect. When hiring contractors we must take the steps necessary to be sure that those we hire have the skills, knowledge base and culture to perform the work in a manner that insures the safety of all and the reliability of our systems.

Information You Need To Know To Determine If A Contractor Is Acceptable

1. Is there a culture of safety?
 - a. Is there a safety manual that is widely distributed
 - b. Are all incidents investigated and the results shared with the workforce
 - c. What safety training is done for new hires and the established work force
 - d. Are site specific safety plans developed
 - e. Are daily pre work safety sessions part of every days routine
 - f. What is the procedure, frequency and documentation of safety audits
 - g. What is the contractors OSHA incident rate for the past 36 months
 - h. What liability claims have been paid in the past 36 months
 - i. Are any liability claims pending

2. As the hiring company does your company have standards for insurance coverage?

Does the contractor have adequate and appropriate insurance in force?

 - a. What are the personal injury limits per incident and total
 - b. What are Liability limits per incident and total
 - c. Is Workman's Compensation coverage active in the state where the job is
 - d. Will coverage allow multiple contractors on site
 - e. Are all vehicles covered with property damage and liability coverage

3. Is the Contractor experienced on similar type work?
 - a. Average Management experience
 - b. Average Supervisory experience
 - c. Average Workforce experience (Climbers specifically)
 - d. References
 - e. Commitment to have task experienced leadership on the job site at all times

4. Are steps taken to insure the work force is legal and drug free?
 - a. Are all workers properly documented
 - b. Are pre-employment physicals and drug screens preformed
 - c. Are random drug screens preformed
 - d. Are drug screen preformed after all incidents
 - e. Are agility and or physical fitness test given prior to employment

5. Is there appropriate initial and ongoing training?
 - a. Is there initial orientation on safety and work practices
 - b. Do all climbers receive training on OSHA regulation
 - c. Is refresher safety and operational training provided

6. Is the contractor willing to follow additional Utility safety rules over and above OSHA regulations?
 - a. All climbers must be certified to climb in an high voltage environment where applicable
 - b. Is RF training provided all climbers
 - c. Is RF training provided ground workers that will be onsite after the equipment is energized

7. Will the contractor accept the fact that the Utility must approve any and all subcontractors hired by the contractor and the subcontractor must adhere to the same safety and performance standards as the prime contractor.