

Excavation Project Prep Checklist

Everything to sort out before the machines arrive — so your dig starts on time and on budget.

PAPERWORK & PERMITS

- ☐ Call **811** at least three business days before digging so public utilities get marked — it's free
- ☐ Check with your city or county whether the job needs a **grading or demolition permit**
- ☐ Dig out your property survey or plot plan — grading and clearing must respect the lines
- ☐ Ask the contractor for **certificates of insurance** (liability and workers' comp)
- ☐ Review HOA rules on tree removal, truck traffic and work hours

KNOW YOUR SITE

- ☐ Mark **private lines** 811 won't locate: sprinklers, septic, propane, landscape lighting
- ☐ Walk the lot after heavy rain and note where water pools or flows
- ☐ Flag every tree you want saved with bright tape or temporary fencing
- ☐ Note soft spots, old stumps or buried debris — **uncompacted fill** changes the plan
- ☐ Locate your septic tank and leach field before any machine crosses them

ACCESS & LOGISTICS

- ☐ Measure the machine path: gate widths, fence panels and **overhead wires**
- ☐ Ask whether driveways and sidewalks get protected with mats or plywood
- ☐ Clear cars, trailers and stored items from the work zone the night before
- ☐ Decide where **spoils and debris** go: stockpiled on site or hauled away
- ☐ Give neighbors a heads-up about truck traffic and noisy days

MONEY & CONTRACT

- ☐ Get the quote **in writing** with scope, depths, haul-off and cleanup spelled out
- ☐ Agree unit prices for rock, groundwater and bad soil before work starts
- ☐ Confirm who pays for imported fill or gravel if the site needs it
- ☐ Tie payments to milestones — never pay 100% up front

DAY OF THE DIG

- ☐ Keep **kids and pets** inside and away from open trenches and machines
- ☐ Take photos of driveways, lawns and structures before work starts
- ☐ Shut off irrigation so struck lines aren't under pressure
- ☐ Walk the site with the operator to confirm stakes, depths and final grades

Never dig near marked utility lines yourself. Hand-dig only within 24 inches of any locate mark — striking a gas or power line can be fatal, and repair bills and fines run into the thousands. When in doubt, stop and call a professional.