



Selecting a Reliable Waterproofing Contractor:

The top 8 questions to ask waterproofing contractors **BEFORE** any work starts.

Waterproofing failures, particularly on balconies, are among the most expensive and disruptive problems a homeowner can face — often causing hidden water damage, structural deterioration, and even serious health risks due to mould. What makes it worse is that many homeowners place their trust in contractors without realising that waterproofing is a **highly specialised** trade requiring strict compliance with Australian Standards.

Too often, poor workmanship or non-compliant repairs only come to light when significant, costly damage has already occurred. At Fortress Waterproof Compliance, we created this guide to protect homeowners from these risks. We've seen firsthand the exposure and risk homeowners find when they place trust in a waterproofing contractor and the works are non-compliant.

By understanding what questions to ask and what standards to expect, you can make informed decisions, prevent expensive mistakes, and safeguard the long-term value and safety of your home.

Choosing the right waterproofing contractor is crucial when fixing a leaking balcony or handling any other waterproofing issues. The goal is to ensure you hire someone who can do the job properly and deliver lasting results. A reliable and skilled contractor will not only understand the specific needs of your project but will also use quality materials and proven techniques to prevent future problems.

They will also not hesitate to share any information with you about your project.

Since waterproofing is a long-term investment in your property's protection, taking the time to carefully evaluate potential contractors is essential.

To make sure you're hiring a professional who can deliver quality work, it's essential to ask the right questions. Here are the **top 8 questions** to guide your conversation with potential contractors, helping you make an informed decision and giving you peace of mind that your project is in good hands.

Top 8 Questions to Ask When Hiring a Waterproofing Contractor (plus some bonus questions)

1. Are you a licensed building practitioner and insured to perform waterproofing work in this state and can you prove it?
2. What experience do you have with projects similar to mine and can you provide references?
3. What relevant waterproofing qualifications do you hold? Can you prove these?
4. How well do you understand the latest Australian Standards, like AS4654.2 and the National Construction Codes relevant to waterproofing?
5. What types of waterproofing systems do you use, and why?
6. What is the warranty on the products and your workmanship guarantee?
7. Do you use subcontractors for any part of the work?
8. Will you issue a certificate of compliance on completion?

Let's take a deeper look at why they are important to ask.

1. Are you a licensed building practitioner and insured to perform waterproofing work?

Asking whether a contractor is licensed and insured is one of the most important steps in selecting a reliable waterproofing professional. Licensing requirements can vary depending on the state or territory, but they typically ensure that the contractor has met specific education, training, and competency standards necessary for waterproofing work.

In Victoria, the VBA manages this registration process. You can visit their [find a Practitioner](#) site and enter the details in for a possible contractor. In Registration category, select Domestic Builder Individual (if a person) and then in Register class, select Domestic Builder – Limited to Waterproofing.



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Search for a building practitioner

- If you see the message "No practitioners found", try entering fewer details.
- The fewer details you enter, the more results you will get.
- When searching by a practitioner's name, try entering only a part of their name.
- When searching by registration number, there must be a space between the class code and the numbers, and the class code will normally contain a dash.
- For example, "DB-U1234" will work. "DBU1234" or "DB-U1234" will not work.
- When searching for an interstate practitioner operating under AMR, you may search by practitioner name and/or ADR number (ADR-#####).

Practitioner name

Registration number/ADR number

Registration category

Domestic Builder Individual

Registration class

Domestic Builder - Limited to waterproofing

Suburb

Postcode



In Victoria, there is no legal requirement YET for the waterproofing contractor to be registered with the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) nor is it a requirement for them to be qualified, yet. If not licensed and registered, then there is a limit in the value of the project – currently \$10,000.00 including GST.

This simply means – if the contractor is registered, then they can do work above \$10,000.00 They will also need to obtain Builder Insurance for any project above \$16,000.00

If not registered – You, the client, are at increased risk and the contractor legally cannot go above \$10,000 project value (including GST)

Insurance is equally critical because it protects both you and the contractor in case something goes wrong during the project.

There are differing levels of insurance to understand.

Public liability insurance covers any damage occurred on your property or injuries to other people that might occur while the contractor is working on-site.

Workers' compensation insurance, on the other hand, ensures that any workers injured during the job are covered. Only registered companies can obtain Workcover insurance (sole traders cannot)

Builder Warranty Insurance – this is ONLY available to licensed and registered building practitioners and is triggered for project above \$16,000.00

Make sure you get copies of all your contractors Certificates of insurance and keep on file.

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P. 0420 361 330

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2. What experience do you have with projects like mine?

A reliable contractor that's proud of their work will have social media, a project portfolio or contacts of previous clients they can call upon to provide references.

It's smart to ask for references from their previous clients, especially those who had similar projects done. Talking to these references will give you a good idea of the contractor's quality of work, their reliability, and how they handle any problems that come up.

Why is asking about similar jobs important here?

Consider this - a Waterproofer may only have completed waterproofing in internal bathrooms and they are standing in front of you discussing your external waterproofing or leaking balcony. Yes, they may be qualified, but they don't have the experience in external waterproofing – with all its specific differences and considerations. What outcome is to be expected? It's something important to ask to build trust.

Let's be honest, not all jobs will be great, amazing, or smashed out of the park. There will be issues, and expectations not met on some jobs. It's essential to assess whether they promptly return to address any problems that may occur and how they respond to your concerns.

A reliable contractor will not only acknowledge issues but also demonstrate a willingness to find alternative solutions that meet your needs. Their ability to communicate openly and effectively during challenging situations reflects their commitment to customer satisfaction and their dedication to delivering quality work. This level of responsiveness can significantly impact your overall experience and the long-term success of the project.

3. What relevant waterproofing qualifications do you hold?

Asking about a contractor's relevant waterproofing qualifications is crucial as it directly impacts the quality and effectiveness of their work. Qualified contractors demonstrate competence through formal training in waterproofing techniques, ensuring familiarity with industry standards and regulations like the National Construction Code (NCC) and Australian Standards (e.g., AS4654.2).

Their expertise in material selection and various waterproofing techniques enhances project outcomes while their problem-solving skills help anticipate and resolve issues effectively.

What minimum qualifications should Waterproofers hold?

The VBA states that to be considered for registration for a Domestic Builder – Limited to Waterproofing (DBL-W) the qualification requirements are:

- CPC31420 or CPC31411 - Certificate III Construction Waterproofing – as a minimum
- Three (3) units from CPC40120 - Certificate IV Building and Construction – however, the full qualification should be obtained.

Both these qualifications are Nationally recognised.

See here for more information from the VBA: [Domestic Builder \(limited to waterproofing\)](#)

Additionally, any membrane manufacturer offered non-accredited training would also be prudent – training such as Gripset GAPP, Ardex Academy, and Bayset Baytech to name some. This shows a contractor's commitment to increasing their knowledge and skills post-formal qualifications for specific membrane systems.

Membership in professional groups like the [Australian Institute of Waterproofing \(AIW\)](#) can also be a good sign that the contractor stays updated on the latest industry standards and practices. Continuous Professional Development will be a critical performance and quality indicator for waterproof trades in the future.

The Registered Training Organisation where the qualification was issued can also be a guiding factor here. The “tick and flick” type places are not as stringent or passionate about student competency as a TAFE or a reputable private RTO is.

Fortress Waterproofing Compliance can perform independent contractor vetting on your behalf for your peace of mind about selecting the best contractor for your project.

4. How well do you understand the latest Australian Standards and relevant NCC codes for waterproofing?

Asking a waterproofing contractor about their understanding of the latest Australian Standards, like AS 4654.2 – waterproofing for external above-ground use – design and installation, is important to ensure your project meets current regulations and best practices.

It's like asking a Chef about a classic recipe or food safety standards– You just have to know it.

These standards, as referenced in the National Construction Code as the “Deemed to Satisfy” solution, guide the design and installation of waterproofing systems, which are essential for preventing water damage in buildings. Things like;

- Fall requirements
- Upturn heights and membrane terminations
- Wind classifications
- Water Shed theory
- Fillet and bond breaker sizes for specific membrane systems
- Penetration detailing

A contractor who knows these standards can apply techniques that not only comply with legal requirements but also improve the effectiveness of the waterproofing solution. Their familiarity with industry standards shows a commitment to quality work, helping to avoid costly repairs in the future.

5. What types of waterproofing systems do you use, and why?

Asking a waterproofing contractor about the types of waterproofing systems they use and the reasons behind their choices is essential for several reasons. We’ve seen internal use membranes be used for external applications with disastrous results.

Different waterproofing systems contain various materials, such as membranes, sealants, and detailing requirements, and understanding these choices can help you assess the quality and durability of the materials they use. This is crucial, as it directly impacts the long-term effectiveness of the waterproofing solution for your home.

Additionally, different systems are designed for specific applications and conditions. For instance, some systems are Undertile – and may only be used when tiling is being applied over it while others might be ideal for exposed balconies or roofs as they are UV stable or trafficable. Some systems may be suitable for “constant immersion” – that is – able to tolerate persistently wet or pooling spots.

Knowing what systems the contractor uses helps you determine if their approach is suitable for your particular project and the unique challenges your home may present.

Moreover, the contractor's preferences may stem from their experience with certain systems. If they consistently use specific products, it's likely they have developed expertise in applying them effectively, leading to better workmanship and results for your home.

On the flip side, a contractor that only uses one system may not be aware of their errors or the membrane systems limits. For example, a Waterproofer may only use XYZ membrane. They are so comfortable with it, they know it back to front and can almost apply it blind. This complacency may lead to errors.

Compliance with industry standards is also vital. By inquiring about the systems they use, you can ensure the contractor understands the necessary regulations, which can help prevent issues in the future.

Another important aspect is the expected durability and maintenance needs of the waterproofing solution. Different systems have varying lifespans and maintenance requirements, and understanding these factors can help you plan for the future. Lastly, the type of waterproofing system can significantly affect the overall cost of the project. By discussing the systems used, you can gain insights into how different materials and methods might influence your budget.

6. Warranties and guarantees you provide.

Understanding warranties and guarantees is another important part of hiring a contractor. A product warranty is a promise from the manufacturer that the materials used in the job won't fail for a certain period of time. On the other hand, a workmanship guarantee means that the contractor stands behind the quality of their installation. If any issues come up because of mistakes they made, they'll fix them at no extra cost to you.

Make sure you know the terms and conditions of these warranties, as some might require you to do regular maintenance to keep them valid.

If you plan to sell your home in the future, check if the warranty can be transferred to the new owner—this can make your property more attractive to buyers.

To make sure you're getting the best value, it's a good idea to get quotes from at least three different contractors. Don't just go for the cheapest option; compare the quality of the materials and the details they provide in their quotes. Finally, choose a contractor who communicates clearly and listens to your concerns. Good communication will make the process smoother and help avoid misunderstandings.

Let's discuss costs – we often get asked about a fair rate for the work. It's a complex area to delve into. Fortress Waterproof Compliance can assist you in reviewing a potential contractor's price and see if it's fair, which would allow you to make a more informed decision.

7. Do you use subcontractors for any part of the work?

When hiring a waterproofing contractor, it is essential to know whether any parts of the work will be subcontracted to others. If a contractor uses subcontractors, there may be less direct oversight over the quality of the work performed. This raises important concerns:

Accountability: If defects arise later, it can be difficult to determine who is responsible — the main contractor or the subcontractor. Homeowners may face delays or disputes when seeking rectification.

Qualifications and Licensing: Subcontractors may not always hold the required waterproofing licences or insurance themselves. This could expose the homeowner to non-compliant work that does not meet Australian Standards (such as AS 4654.2) or local regulatory requirements.

Certificate of Compliance: In many Australian states (such as Victoria), the person who physically performs the waterproofing must be properly qualified and licensed to issue a valid Certificate of Compliance. If the work is done by an unlicensed subcontractor, the homeowner may not be legally protected.

Workmanship Consistency: Using subcontractors can result in inconsistent workmanship if different tradespeople are involved, particularly when attention to detail and specialist techniques are required.

Insurance and Warranty Coverage: If subcontractors are used, it must be confirmed whether the primary contractor's insurance and workmanship warranty fully cover their work. Otherwise, homeowners may face gaps in protection.

Key Tip:

Always ask if subcontractors will be used, who they are, whether they are licensed and insured, and whether the main contractor remains fully responsible for all workmanship, compliance, and warranties

8. Will you issue a certificate of compliance on completion?

Requesting confirmation that the registered contractor will issue a Certificate of Compliance is vital because it protects the homeowner both legally and practically. In many Australian states, including Victoria, waterproofing work valued over a certain threshold (or work that affects the structure, waterproofing, or health and safety of a building) must be completed by a registered or licensed practitioner who is authorised to issue a Certificate of Compliance.

This certificate is critical because:

Proof of Compliance with Standards: It provides formal evidence that the waterproofing work has been completed in accordance with the Australian Standards (such as AS 4654.2) and the National Construction Code (NCC).

Legal Protection: It safeguards the homeowner's legal rights if a future defect arises. Without a valid Certificate of Compliance, the homeowner may have no clear recourse against defective work.

Insurance and Warranty Validity: Home insurance claims for water damage or future warranty claims may be denied if the homeowner cannot provide evidence that waterproofing work was completed properly and legally.

Building Surveyor or Council Requirements: For building permits, renovations, or property sales, certificates may be required as part of compliance documentation.

Consumer Protection: In states like Victoria, the Building Act requires a defect liability period (typically 6–7 years) for regulated building work — but this protection relies on proper certificates being issued at the time of work.

Key Tip:

Always ask in writing whether the contractor will issue a Certificate of Compliance on completion and never make final payment until it has been received.

What if your contractor is NOT registered or licensed.

Thats OK – they can still issue a non-legally binding certificate or statement of installation stating that the works they have completed are in accordance with relevant standards and codes used in that application and at that time.

By doing thins, they are showing you that they have confidence on their application.

See below an example of a good certificate.

<p>Client: Completed: Completed by: Job: Job #: Site Address:</p>	
<p>Certificate of Compliance - Waterproofing</p> <p>Compliance to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Construction Code Volume One (Class 2 to 9 buildings): Part F1 waterproofing of wet areas in buildings Building Code of Australia (Volume 2) Class 1 to 10 buildings - Part 3.8.1 Australian Standard 3740 - Waterproofing of Domestic Wet Areas Australian Standard 4654 - Waterproofing membranes for external above-ground use 	
Date Of Issue	17th Dec 2023
Class of Install	External Above Ground
Works Undertaken / system installed	<p>Waterproofing installed on new Screed substrate on repaired structural flooring system.</p> <p>Repairs made to structural components of the external balcony in that the existing tiles and failed Plywood flooring was removed, bearers and joists inspected, additional structural repairs made to assist in structural integrity.</p> <p>Once rectified, new sheet flooring installed (25mm Scyon or similar) with a "floating", reinforced screed with movement control around perimeter was installed. Fall waxes AS4654.2 minimum.</p> <p>Waterproofing elements under screed include sealant applied around perimeter joints and sheet joints.</p> <p>Waterproofing installed on fall substrate (Screed) includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Epoxy primer to floors Non porous primer to walls and PVC flange 1st coat of UV stable membrane (WPA 230UV) with required bond breaker systems installed. Bond Breaker system included WPS Elastobond to perimeter wall / floor and wall / wall junctions. Sealant applied around door installation Wall cracks repaired and flased 2nd coat of WPA 230UV membrane Coats of WPA tuffcoat to walls tp lipvide protection

<p>Notable Comments</p>	<p>Project Images - 63 Cocoon Jackson Lane Images</p> <p>Note - under door threshold membrane was not installed. Minimum upturn at door hob was 40mm and door was not removed.</p>
<p>File Upload</p>	<p>Name: WPA 230UV Water Based Polyurethane External Membrane.pdf Download File Size: 127.071 kb</p>
<p>Certifying Installer:</p> <p>I hereby certify that the waterproofing installed at the site address and abovementioned wet areas have been carried out with the provisions of the Building Code of Australia - AS3740 waterproofing of domestic wet areas AS 4654.2 - Waterproofing membranes for external above-ground use and all manufacturers specifications and recommendations.</p>	
<p>Warranty</p> <p>We certify that the waterproofing materials and method of installation comply with Australian Standards, BCA and manufacturers specifications. This warranty is only valid once full payment for works performed has been received. In the case a product or workmanship is deemed by an impartial professional to be faulty, we guarantee the product/s will be rectified or replaced as we deem necessary. It is imperative to allow proper curing times, which vary due to climatic and project conditions. Please ask for information regarding following works on or over new membranes. Warranty validity is subject to all subsequent responsibilities by any persons after installation being carried out properly. Any other subsequent works or cost's are not covered under this warranty. It is the customers responsibility to ensure correct post-procedures are carried out. The Warranty - implied or Otherwise is conditional to the specifics of the project. The Quotation/Tender or instrument of Contract together with the standard or special Terms & Conditions are to be read in conjunction in respect of the warranty</p>	
<p>Warranty Period</p> <p>Warranty Period 7 years on Waterproofing : 17th Dec 2023 - 17th Dec 2030</p>	

Full disclosure and all images (Pre, during and after installation) should be attached to this certificate as evidence in case of failure or warranty claim.

Bonus Section – printable for your files

Warning Signs to Watch For

- No licence or insurance proof.
- Vague about compliance or standards.
- Only verbal quotes, no detailed breakdown.
- Reluctance to offer references.
- Pressure to sign quickly or large upfront payments.
- No Certificate of Compliance offered.
- Extremely low quote compared to others.
- Poor communication or evasive answers.

Tip:

Always seek written documentation.

A good contractor will welcome your questions!

Pre-Interview Quick Checklist

Item ✓

Licensed for waterproofing work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Current public liability insurance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explains compliance with AS 4654.2/NCC	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality membrane with product warranty	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workmanship warranty (7+ years)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Written quote with clear scope	<input type="checkbox"/>
Certificate of Compliance promised	<input type="checkbox"/>
Past references provided	<input type="checkbox"/>

We are here to Help you

How Fortress Waterproof Compliance Can Help You

At Fortress Waterproof Compliance, we understand that navigating waterproofing regulations, contractor qualifications, and compliance requirements can be overwhelming for homeowners.

Our service is designed to give you peace of mind by ensuring that any waterproofing work undertaken on your property meets the highest Australian Standards and regulatory obligations.

We provide independent inspections, contractor verification, and compliance auditing services. Whether you are planning a new waterproofing project, managing repairs to a leaking balcony, or seeking assurance that previous work has been completed correctly, we can assist.

Our team can confirm that your contractors are properly licensed, ensure a valid Certificate of Compliance is issued, and identify any non-compliant or poor-quality workmanship before it leads to serious damage or costly rectification.

With Fortress Waterproof Compliance on your side, you can move forward confidently, knowing your home is protected by knowledge, experience, and strict adherence to industry standards.

Contact us today on 0420 361 330 to discuss how we can guide and assist you.

