

17 Questions to Ask Every Estate Sale Company

Ask all three companies the same questions and write the answers down while you are sitting there. After three consultations they blur together.

Estate Greats

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QUESTION	COMPANY 1	COMPANY 2	COMPANY 3
Money & terms			
1 What is your commission? Typical range is 30–50%. Meaningless without Q2.			
2 Any fees besides commission? Ask each: advertising, labor, dumpster, card processing, heavy items, cleaning, minimums.			
3 Do you charge sales tax? Sales for a disclosed owner are generally exempt in TN — ask what their basis is.			
4 How long until I'm paid? Get a number of days. Is the report itemized?			
Trust & protection			
5 Insurance? What types? Ask for a certificate, not a verbal yes.			
6 Can I review the contract before signing? Ask for a copy to keep. Read: commission, fees, end condition, unsold items, cancellation.			
7 Do you pre-sell or allow early entry? If the best items go early, your total drops.			
8 Do you or your staff buy items? Ask to see the written policy. Who prices staff purchases?			
People & expertise			
9 Appraiser on staff, or access to one? What happens when something unfamiliar turns up?			
10 What is your field of expertise? Antiques, art, furniture, jewelry, tools, volume?			
11 How many staff for a sale like mine? Ask for a number for your size home.			

The schedule

12 How many days to set up?

Also: how long is the house unavailable to me?

13 How many days will the sale run?

Ask the markdown schedule too.

14 When could you do the sale?

Specific dates. Mention any closing or move-out deadline.

After the sale & seeing it for yourself

15 How will my home be left?

Broom clean, empty, as-is? Get it in the contract.

16 Do you have a store?

If unsold items go there — who owns them, and do I share?

17 Any upcoming sales I could visit?

The most useful question here. Go stand in one.

Notes & gut check

Did they listen? Did they explain things, or talk past you? Would you be comfortable handing them the keys?

COMPANY 1

COMPANY 2

COMPANY 3

Answers that should give you pause

- "I'd have to check on the commission"
- You can't take the contract home
- "We'll sort out the fees later"
- No certificate of insurance
- A vague payment timeline
- No upcoming sale you can visit
- Pressure to sign today
- No written staff-purchasing policy

Adapted from the questions EstateSales.NET suggests families ask when choosing a company. Estate Greats has published its own answer to all 17 at estategreats.net/questions-to-ask-estate-sale-company

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