

Questions to Ask your Title Insurance Provider

Price is important but there are other factors to consider

The knowledge and experience of the title agent can make a significant difference in the service you receive. Use the following questions to learn more about prospective title insurance agents.

Independence - An independent title insurance agent (one who has no compensation based relationship with a referring party) is much more likely to be free of conflicts of interest and hold no loyalties to other parties in the transaction. It is essential to know this information before you entrust a title insurance agent with one of your most important financial transactions.

Ask: Is your title insurance agency in any way related or affiliated with any party in the transaction? (Real Estate Agent, Lender, Real Estate Broker, Attorney, or Builder)

Is anyone receiving a referral fee, commission, or other non-monetary compensation for referring my business to a title agency?

Experience – while experience isn't an ironclad guarantee of a smooth transaction, it significantly reduces the risk of unnecessary surprises and avoidable problems.

Ask: How many years has your business been in operation?

What is the average number of years of title insurance experience of your staff? Your closers?

Credentials – licensing is the highest standard. While it isn't technically required to conduct a closing in Pennsylvania, it is an indication of knowledge and expertise within the industry.

Ask: What percentage of your closing staff is licensed?
(A licensed closer isn't a guarantee of great service, but you know they have met the minimum requirements for licensure and are receiving ongoing professional training)

Does your staff have additional credentials or relevant qualifications?
(Certifications and other designations are further evidence of knowledge and professionalism. Professional designations such as ALTP and CLTP provide further assurance of exceptional knowledge and experience)

Quality – professional staff and knowledge of local rules, regulations, and customs is a must.

Is the person handling my closing an employee, a contractor, or another third party?
(Contractors and other parties may be convenient for your title agent, but often they are assigned simply because they are available, not because they are the right person for your transaction)

Ask: Do you have offices in my local area? How long have you been conducting transactions in my area?
(If they aren't located nearby, or they are new to the area, they might not have developed a deep understanding of your market)

Are the owners of the agency on site and involved in the daily operations?
(Absentee ownership can cause issues in quality)

Service – good service makes all the difference. Being able to reach someone who can help you or have important questions answered in a timely manner is critical.

Ask: Do you have references or testimonials that are publically available? If so, where?

Can you tell me who will be handling my file if I place an order with you? Can you guarantee it?
(Large national operations and the so-called discounters will pass you and your file from person to person however it best suits them.)