

## **Estimates & Design Fees**

### **Why we charge, When we charge, and What you can expect.**

One of the most common statements we hear on the phone is, "You do not do free estimates?, but it will only take 15 minutes to stop by and take a look!"

And in some cases you are correct. Estimates vary and there is a big difference between an insurance estimate for lawn damage and a full backyard makeover. However, there are many factors that might get overlooked. The time it takes to drive to your home from our shop in Guys Mills and the time it takes to drive back might add up to an additional 30 minutes or more (and don't forget about fuel and wear & tear on the vehicle). Then, to work up an estimate for you, we come back into the office and figure up the prices of materials and labor that will go into your project. This may take another 20 minutes or more. Then the estimate is printed (cost of paper & ink) and mailed (envelope and stamp). If it is a more complex estimate that requires a design, another 8 hours could go into that and much more ink and paper to print it. After an estimate and/or design is completed we schedule a second meeting to come back and explain what we have come up with. We only mail non-design estimates. All others require a second meeting.

To simplify, we only charge \$50 standard fee for all non-maintenance estimates. If a customer wishes to buy a design, we look at the hours it took to put it together. A design fee can range anywhere from \$200 to \$400 depending on the complexity and size of the job. This design fee is separate from the estimate fee and entitles you to a full color digital design print out, a product list with quantities needed, price list, and plant specs. It is not necessary to purchase a design if you plan to have us install it.

**When an estimate is free:** We will provide you with an estimate for free if we are hired to do the work. Cash or a check for \$50 is due at the initial visit. The estimate fee will be deducted off of the final bill as a \$50 credit. Estimates are good for 90 days only, however your \$50 credit will always be available towards a job if you should decide to wait.

**MAINTENANCE ESTIMATES ARE FREE.** This means if you want us to tell you how much it will be to maintain your lawn or snow plowing we will give you a quoted rate for free. This is because this kind of estimate can be done while on route; in other words, while running other errands we can drive by and take a quick look. This does not require an appointment or a meeting with a customer. We will call you or send your quote in the mail.

**Existing Customers:** We never charge existing customers for estimates.

**Why is charging for estimates good for you?** Charging allows us to be more attentive to our customers needs and allows us extra time to examine and explain any problems or concerns as well as express any creative design ideas. We love to get a feel for the style of the homeowner and what their expectations are. It also allows us to take fewer appointments in a day. This benefit is passed on to you by having a smiling, professional at your door instead of a road raged, rushed, overworked technician. You can expect our technicians to be professional, trustworthy, honest and in uniform at all times. Should

you get anything less, please call the office and ask to speak to Deanna or Jason.

**Other Companies:** There are other landscaping companies that perform free estimates. These companies are often running around giving a ton of estimates. They spend a lot of time working up jobs they will never do-and since they know this-they do not put their best efforts towards details, creativity, and realistic prices. When you call us to come out we know you are serious about your project and we know you want nothing but the best. I have heard customers complain that a company either did not show up or showed up hours late. That is probably because a paying customer called and wanted the same time slot and they were forced to "dump" the free estimates for the day. Here at Jason Howles Landscaping, if you are paying for that appointment slot, that is the same as a reservation and we will show up with in the time frame specified. (there are certain circumstances which the technician can be late, but we will do our best to let the customer know as soon as possible.)

Another problem that customers have when dealing with companies with free estimates, is qualifications, many of these companies do not have certified or experienced technicians or references, so even though they have a free estimate, they suddenly find they don't trust it.

**Curious Customers:** For customers who are just curious what a service would cost and are at the beginning of their research process, you are more than welcome to call our office; we may be able to get you a loose cost estimate on a job you are planning, depending on if know specifics of what you want. Also, if you pick out a picture from the website you like and want to know how much that would cost, we can give you a loose estimate on that. **You are also welcome to fax over another companies estimate and we could write up the estimate with our prices-we'll do our best to beat it!** (please keep in mind that we will not accept any job that we have not personally seen, this is just a service for the curious shopper).