



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Key questions to ask before choosing
a steel framing machine in 2025

Buying a steel framing machine is a big step towards scaling your construction capabilities. But how do you ensure you are making the right choice?

The best way to avoid the common pitfalls is to ask some practical questions upfront about build quality, software compatibility, ongoing support, transportability, sustainability, and proven leaders in the digital fabrication market for nearly 50 years.

By answering these questions, you will see why so many forward-thinking builders and manufacturers choose Howick machines to best set themselves up for success for years to come.

Frequently asked questions

Is the machine accurate to the millimetre?

Precision is the core characteristic that every other benefit of steel framing is built on, so start here and do not compromise.

Howick machines are engineered to deliver components to your exact measurements, right down to the millimetre. This precision speeds up assembly, improves the overall quality of construction, and reduces the need for rework. Ultimately, high-precision machines will save you time, minimise waste and cut your costs.

Are all roll-forming machines essentially the same?

No, not all roll-forming machines are created equal. Howick machines have unique features that you will not find elsewhere, such as the [true-end-bearing detail](#). Exclusive to Howick machines, this feature crimps in the radius on the stud profile, so studs sit perfectly flat into the top and bottom tracks of a panel. This single feature reduces vertical shrinkage and eliminates shear stress on screws to improve the structural integrity of your builds.

Can I use any design software, or am I compelled to use that which is provided by the machine supplier?

Some machine suppliers require you to use their proprietary software. This can limit your design solutions and incur additional costs. In contrast, Howick machines feature an open-language control system, which reads CSV files, making them compatible with various CAD

software packages, including [Autodesk](#), [Strucsoft](#), [Tekla](#), [Vertex](#), [FrameBuilder-MRD](#), [Dynamo](#), [StudFinder](#), and many more.

Having a machine that integrates with your current design software could shorten your go-to-market timings. At the same time, you also want to allow for changes in the future as your business and needs grow.

If you value flexibility, you will want a machine that easily integrates with different software without costly licensing fees.

Because Howick machines are software agnostic, you can design with the software that best fits your workflow, now and into the future.

Finally, think of it this way. You as an end user want to drive change in the market. In an open competitive software market, you are in control to do that. In a proprietary software market, you are held captive!

Are there ongoing fees and hidden costs? Will these blow out my budget?

Buying a roll-forming machine is just one cost to consider. Are there also ongoing licensing fees for proprietary software or an extra fee per metre of steel you roll? These are hidden costs that can quickly add up. They can also increase at any time, which leaves you at the mercy of a supplier.

At Howick, we don't clip the ticket after the sale. We don't believe in it. You only pay for the machine and essential maintenance when needed onsite after the warranty period. This predictable cost structure allows for clearer budgeting and a quicker ROI.

No mandatory software licensing fees

With Howick, there are no ongoing software license fees. The open-language control system allows you to use your preferred solution without additional licensing costs. As your software needs evolve, you are free to make changes without being locked into a single provider or recurring charges.

No toll-to-roll meterage rates

Some other suppliers charge meterage; Howick does not. Once you own a Howick machine, you can produce as much steel framing as needed without paying toll-to-roll fees. We want you to maximise your machine usage without worrying about hidden costs impacting your production budget.

Can you have a “mobile factory” with machines operating onsite?

For most builders, factory manufacturing is the best solution and will provide you with the most options, flexibility and efficiency.

However, a mobile factory is possible for some specific uses. For example, to build emergency shelters and provide disaster relief, the [US Navy Construction Battalion \(called the SeaBees\)](#)

transports and operates Howick FRAMA™ 3200 machines inside standard shipping containers. In this situation, speed and utility are the most important factors.

How important is customer support and training for my team?

Ongoing support is important for machines to operate efficiently and reliably. That includes regular maintenance, ongoing training, and accessible support systems.

Howick provides reliable support, with extensive training options to get your team up to speed quickly. With a global support network, you have help when you need it, maximising uptime and productivity.

Where was my machine built?

The supply chain involved in producing your machine can significantly affect its quality, performance, and environmental impact. With Howick machines, you have complete transparency about where every part comes from and who put it all together.

Every Howick machine is 100% New Zealand-made using precision-engineered components that we manufacture in-house or source locally. We also assemble everything inside our Auckland plant, where our team of highly trained specialists bring years of experience and meticulous attention to each job.

This gives us the advantage of tremendous quality control. We have oversight of our complete supply chain, systems and processes, ensuring a level of reliability and performance that sets our technology apart. By keeping everything under one roof, we can swiftly adapt to your needs, incorporate your customisations, and reduce the risk of supply chain disruptions. Because of this, we can provide industry-leading levels of uptime for our systems and quality guarantees that are unique in the sector.

Where can I access steel and what type do I need?

At Howick our Regional Managers can provide you with points of contacts you can reach out to in the market. We do not become a middleman to sell you steel, we prefer to refer you to the source to get the best price.

For a more in-depth look at why you should choose Howick for all your LGS requirements, download our [Machine Buyer Guide](#) today.

Alternatively, you can contact us via our website at www.howickltd.com, or get in touch with our Head of Global Sales, Deon Anderson, on deon@howickltd.com.

