

Most owners assume a fence quote is a simple number. You call a contractor, they look at the yard, they email a price, and you compare it against two other prices and pick the lowest. That assumption is wrong in a way that costs people real money, because a quote is only as good as the information behind it. If you want to know how to compare local fence contractors properly, start here: everything you gather, check, and decide before requesting a fence quote determines whether the quotes you receive are meaningful at all. A contractor who arrives knowing nothing about your property line, your shared fence, your access, or your expectations will hand you a number that is mostly guesswork, and three pieces of guesswork do not add up to a comparison. They add up to confusion. The preparation comes first, the numbers follow, and the preparation is the part most owners skip.

How to Compare Local Fence Contractors: The Quote Is Only as Good as the Information Behind It

Think of a fence quote as an answer to a question. A contractor can only answer the questions you put in front of them, so the quality of the answer depends on the quality of the question. If you have not measured the run, they will measure it on the visit, which is fine. If you have not decided whether the old fence comes out, they will guess, and the guess shows up in the price. If you do not know where the property line runs, they will assume the existing fence marks it, and that assumption can sit under the whole project like a time bomb. The preparation below takes an afternoon, and it turns every quote you receive from a guess into an answer you can actually compare.

Know Your Property Line Before You Call

The single most expensive mistake in fence buying is building on the wrong line. If the old fence has been there for decades, it is natural to assume it marks the boundary, and often it does not. A fence built a foot inside the true line leaves a strip of your neighbor's land on the wrong side of your new fence. [pool enclosure contractor](#) A fence built over the line can trigger a dispute that costs far more than the fence itself. Before you request a quote, confirm where the line actually runs. A recent survey is the gold standard. If you do not have one, your municipal office can tell you what records exist for your lot, and a neighbor with an older survey may have a drawing that shows your shared boundary. Verify the current rules for fence placement in your city as well, because height and placement requirements vary across the GTA, and a design that is fine in Milton may not be fine in Markham.

If the fence will sit on or near a shared boundary, have the conversation with the neighbor before you call contractors. You do not need their permission to get a quote, but you do need to know their position on the project: whether they use the fence, whether they would object to the height, and whether they want to be part of the decision. The answer shapes the scope you hand to estimators, and it prevents the most common mid-project surprise in GTA fence work, which is the neighbor who shows up on day one with different expectations.

Gather the Paperwork Before You Gather Quotes

A few documents turn you from a customer into a prepared client. The survey drawing, if you have one, is the most important. The contract from the last fence installation, if it exists, tells you what material and design were originally installed and whether a warranty or maintenance schedule came with them. If you live in a townhouse or a condo town, the declaration or the board's rules may govern what you can build, where, and who approves it, so check those before you spend time on a design that will never be approved. Utility easements and hydro corridors at the back of the lot come with their own access rules, and the utility or the municipality can confirm what applies to your property. Have copies ready to show the estimator on the site visit. A contractor who sees that you have

done the homework treats the job differently, because they know the project will not stall on paperwork halfway through.



Take the Measurements and Photos a Contractor Needs

Rough numbers make quotes comparable. Walk the line with a tape measure or a measuring wheel and write down the total linear footage of fence you want, corner to corner, gate openings included. You do not need survey precision; you need a number close enough that every contractor prices the same run. Count the corners and note where the fence changes direction. Measure the gate openings you have in mind, both the width you want and the width that physically exists between the house and the garage. Then take photos of everything a contractor will care about: rot at ground level, leaning posts, the grade change behind the garage, the tree roots pushing against the line, the spot where water pools after rain, and the narrow side yard where materials will have to pass. If you want to go further, set a few stakes along the proposed line so the estimator can see the run at a glance. Photos and stakes do not replace the site visit, but they let a contractor arrive ready to talk about solutions instead of spending the whole visit discovering problems you already knew about.

Answer the Access Questions First

Before any contractor can price the job, they need to know how the work will get done on your property. Where will materials be delivered, and can a truck get close, or does everything travel by hand through the side yard? Where will the crew park, and does your street have parking rules that will complicate a full workday? Is there a gate that locks, a dog in the yard, or a neighbor whose lawn the crew will need to cross? If the fence line runs tight against a neighbor's property, have you spoken to them about access and about the shared fence itself? If you have a pool, does the enclosure have to stay functional during the work, or can the old fence come down all at once? If you manage a commercial property, add the same questions about staging and parking for the crew, because a parking lot job has its own access math. Answering these before you call means you tell every contractor the same facts, and the quotes will reflect the same reality instead of five different assumptions about the same driveway.

Decide the Big Three Before You Call: Material, Height, Gates

You do not need a finished design to request a quote, but you need a starting point, and the starting point is three decisions: material, height, and gates. A contractor who hears "cedar, six feet, one four-foot gate" knows what to price. A contractor who hears "I want a fence, what do you recommend" will recommend whatever they sell most, and you will receive three quotes for three different products. If you are unsure, do the research before you call: look at fences in your neighborhood, think about whether privacy or durability matters more to you, and check the height rules for your municipality, including pool enclosure requirements if the fence will surround a pool. Consider snow and wind too: a six-foot solid fence on an exposed lot carries real load in a GTA winter, and the post spacing and installation method need to account for it. Then commit to a starting scope and tell every contractor the same thing, with room to adjust after the site visit. An informed change is a negotiation. A blank slate is a gamble.

Write Down the Questions You Will Ask Everyone

Comparison only works when the answers are comparable, so prepare one short list of questions and ask every contractor the same ones. The list does not need to be long, but it should cover the same ground each time:

- Do you install with your own crews or subcontract the work?
- Who runs the job day to day, and how do I reach them?
- What does the schedule look like this season, and when could you start?
- Do you remove and dispose of the old fence, and is that in the quote?
- What post installation method do you use, and why, for this soil?
- What is included in the quote, what is not, and how do you handle surprises?

Write the answers down as you go. The contractor who gives clear answers to all six is telling you they have done this before. The one who goes vague at question three is telling you something too, and it is worth hearing.

What a Good Quote Package Looks Like

When the quotes arrive, you should be able to see the anatomy of each one. A good quote names the material and its specifications, the height and total length, the gates and their hardware, the post installation method, the removal and disposal of the old fence, the finish and treatment, the timeline, and the cleanup commitment. A single lump sum with no breakdown is a warning sign, because you cannot compare a lump sum to anything. A quote that names the schedule but not the cleanup is incomplete, and a quote that promises everything in one opaque total is **affordable residential fence contractor** hiding the decisions you need to see. Ask each contractor what is not included, because the exclusions are where surprises hide. Ask about the payment schedule and the warranty in writing, and verify anything involving permits, insurance, or municipal requirements with the people who actually issue them. And remember the rule from the opening of this article: the final number depends on your scope and your market, so the value of a quote is not the total. It is the clarity of what that total buys.

Your Preparation Is the Comparison

When you have walked the line, confirmed the boundary, gathered the paperwork, answered the access questions, made your starting decisions, and asked the same questions of every candidate, the comparison almost runs itself. The quotes finally describe the same fence, and your job becomes weighing honest differences instead of decoding three different guesses. That is what to know about how to compare local fence contractors before requesting a fence quote: the work comes first, the numbers follow, and the owner who prepares well is the owner who gets the fence they actually wanted.