

Two neighbors on the same street ordered nearly identical fences last year. Same height, same material, same length of line. One called in November and had the fence standing before the snow melted. The other called in June, waited eight weeks, and paid for the privilege of waiting, not in a line item on the invoice, but in the material they couldn't get, the crew time they couldn't book, and the decisions they had to make in a hurry when the date finally arrived.

That second neighbor is not unusual, and this article is for them. Scheduling, lead times, and project communication do not just decide when your fence gets built. They decide what it costs, what options are still on the table when you sign, and how many of your decisions get made calmly versus made under pressure.

The connection between the calendar and the price is real, and it runs through every stage of the project.

How Scheduling, Lead Times, and Project Communication Move the Price

Fence pricing follows demand, and demand follows the season. Spring and early summer are when every property owner in the GTA suddenly remembers they need a fence, and contractors respond the way every industry responds to a rush: capacity fills, dates push out, and the work that gets booked late costs more or comes with fewer choices. Fall is the mirror image. Crews have openings, materials are easier to source, and the conversation with an estimator is longer and calmer.

That does not mean fall is always cheaper, and it does not mean you should wait for a deal. What it means is that the timing of your search changes the shape of your project: the options you can choose from, the dates you can get, and the amount of time you have to make decisions without pressure.

The factors that actually drive the number on a fence quote are the ones worth understanding, because they explain why two similar fences rarely cost the same:

- Material type and quality: cedar, vinyl, aluminum, chain link, and composite each carry their own cost, and within each material the grade varies a lot.
- Linear footage and height: more fence, more cost, and taller fences use more material and often heavier posts.
- Gates and hardware: every gate adds materials, hinges, latches, and labor, and a wider driveway gate adds more still.
- Terrain and access: a flat, open yard with a wide gate for the crew is a different job than a ravine lot in Burlington with a narrow side passage.
- Demolition and disposal: removing and hauling away the old fence is real work that shows up on the quote.
- Post installation method: concrete-set posts, driven posts, and screw piles differ in labor, equipment, and suitability to your soil.
- Finish: staining, sealing, or painting adds labor and materials on top of the build.

The final number depends on your specific scope and the market at the time you get quotes. Anyone who quotes over the phone without seeing your yard is guessing, and you should treat the guess accordingly.

The Peak-Season Tradeoff

Here is the tradeoff nobody explains at the start: a June start date buys you good weather and costs you everything else. In peak season you are competing with every other owner in the region for crew time, so your

start date slips more easily, your material choices narrow to what is in stock, and your contractor has less time to walk the property and think about your specific problems. The fence still gets built. The experience is just more rushed.

Contrast that with a shoulder-season build. In late fall the ground is still workable, the crews are available, and the estimator can spend an hour on your yard instead of fifteen minutes. The tradeoff runs the other way: colder days, shorter daylight, and a finish that has less time to settle before winter sets in. Neither choice is wrong. What is wrong is making it without knowing what you traded.

Ask the contractor what season they prefer for your type of job, and ask what they would change about your project if you booked for the opposite season. The answers are usually revealing.

Weather Windows and the Spring Thaw

GTA soil is a scheduling problem of its own. Clay soils, common across much of the region, hold water through the spring thaw, and digging in mud is slow, messy work that produces a weaker post installation than digging in dry ground. Experienced crews watch the ground, not just the forecast. A contractor who refuses to set posts in saturated clay is not stalling; they are protecting the fence from heaving next winter.

Freeze-thaw cycles also affect when a job can happen and when it should happen. Fences built late in the season on wet ground can shift during the first thaw, which is why honest contractors build a spring inspection into the conversation. If you are scheduling a fall build, ask how the posts will behave over winter and what the contractor recommends checking in the spring.

Snow and wind loads matter too, especially for tall privacy fences and for commercial sites with wide expanses of panel. A fence that looks right in August can look different after a winter of snow piled against it. Ask about bracing, post depth, and panel strength for your specific exposure.

Materials: What You Can Get When You Need It

Material availability is the quiet driver of both schedules and prices. Popular materials get ordered in batches, and in peak season the good stuff runs short. Owners who book early can specify exactly what they want. Owners who book late get whatever the supplier has, and they often pay a premium for it, because in-stock material in June is not the same as ordered material in March.

Ask the contractor three things about materials:

- What is the current lead time on the material I am considering, and does it change my start date?
- Is the price locked when I sign, or can material cost changes reach me before the build?
- If my first-choice material is delayed, what are the alternatives, and how do they compare on cost, look, and lifespan?

The last question is the one that protects you. A contractor who can lay out the tradeoffs between your first and second choices, honestly, including the cost differences, is a contractor you can plan with. One who says "we'll figure it out" is asking you to make a rushed decision later, at the worst possible time.

Change Orders: The Decision That Costs the Most

Every fence project has a moment where reality meets the plan. The ground is rockier than expected. The neighbor's tree leans over the line. You realize the gate should be wider for the mower. How that moment is

handled, and what it costs, is decided months earlier by the quality of the communication you set up.

Changes made during the build cost more than changes made before it. The crew is on site, the schedule is set, and the materials may already be cut. That is not a contractor gouging you; it is the nature of interrupting work in progress. The way to keep change costs down is to decide everything you can before the crew arrives, and to have an agreed process for the surprises you cannot plan for.

Get the process in writing: who approves a change, how the cost is communicated before the work happens, and how the schedule adjusts. A contractor who documents changes as they happen is protecting you both. One who shrugs and says "we'll sort it out on the invoice" is setting you up for a conversation you do not want to have.

Book Early or Wait: The Decision Framework

So what should you actually do? Here is a framework instead of a rule.

Book early when you know what you want, when your property line is settled, and when the fence solves a real problem: a pool that needs enclosing, a dog that needs containing, a yard that needs privacy before the summer. Early booking costs you nothing except a deposit and a decision, and it buys you material choice, date choice, and a calmer process.

Wait when you are still deciding, when the boundary with the neighbor is genuinely unresolved, or when you want to ***You can find out more*** compare materials in person across a few suppliers. Waiting is not a sin; it is a decision. The sin is waiting without a plan, calling in June, expecting a June date, and then discovering that the schedule you wanted was already gone.



The key decisions that shape the schedule, and the price, come down to a short list: height, material, gates, post method, and finish. Decide those five things before you call, and every conversation you have will be faster, cheaper, and more honest.

Commercial Sites Run on Their Own Clock

Commercial fencing, around strip malls in Mississauga, parking lots in Vaughan, industrial yards in Oshawa, follows the same scheduling logic with different constraints. Tenant access, parking closures, and business hours all shape when the work can happen, and a fence around a parking lot often has to go up in stages rather than in one clean pass.

If you manage commercial property, ask about staged installation, after-hours work, and how access for deliveries and tenants is maintained. The approvals may also differ from residential rules, so confirm the zoning and permit requirements for your site with the municipality before scheduling. And plan for security: a partially installed fence is an invitation, so the sequencing of gates and panels matters as much as the material.

The Decision Is Yours, Either Way

Here is the honest summary. The calendar decides what your fence costs and what options you have, and the only person who can control the calendar is you, before the rush. Ask about lead times the way you ask about materials. Treat the spring thaw, the summer backlog, and the material order as facts of the project rather than excuses. Decide your five key choices early, and set up communication that documents every change.

Owners who treat scheduling, lead times, and project communication as part of the price, because they are, end up with a better fence for the same money, or the same fence for less. The choice of when to build is the first decision of the project, and it is the only one you can make entirely on your own.