

A fence replacement job looks simple from the street. Panels come down, new posts go in, gates are hung, and by the end of the week the yard looks cleaner and more secure. On site, it is rarely that tidy.

Any experienced fence contractor will tell you that the real work starts before the first board is removed. Old fence removal can uncover rotted posts buried in oversized concrete, shifted property lines, hidden roots, improvised repairs from three owners ago, and gate openings that were never square to begin with. A reliable local fence company plans for those conditions, prices them honestly, and builds the new fence so the same problems do not return in five years.

That matters whether you are hiring a residential fence contractor for backyard fence installation in Mississauga, a commercial fence contractor for perimeter fence installation in Vaughan, or a chain-link fence installer for a utility yard in Oshawa. The sequence changes slightly by project type, but the job usually follows the same practical logic: inspect, measure, verify rules, remove, prepare, install, and fine-tune.

The first visit is less about style and more about what is hiding underground

Homeowners often call a fencing company expecting the first conversation to revolve around fence styles, fence panels, and colours. Those choices do matter, especially for privacy fence installation or a good neighbour fence along a shared property line. But a seasoned fence installation company spends the first site visit reading the land.

That means checking slope, drainage, mature trees, retaining walls, sheds, decks, downspouts, and the relationship between the old fence and the actual property boundary fence location. It also means looking at how the current fence failed. Leaning sections usually point to loose fence posts or frost movement. Sagging fence gates often mean the hinge post was undersized, set too shallow, or pulled out of plumb over time. Bottom rot on a wood fence installer's previous work usually tells a story about trapped moisture, poor grade, or lumber that sat too close to soil.

In the Greater Toronto Area, a fence contractor Greater Toronto Area homeowners trust will also ask where snow gets piled in winter. That sounds minor until a swing gate can no longer open because the driveway side heaves or drifts. A Toronto fence contractor working in tight urban lots may also need to think about laneway access, hand-carrying materials, and where debris bins can legally sit.

At this stage, the contractor is already weighing fence repair or replacement. Sometimes a fence company can save sound sections and replace only failed runs or a gate assembly. More often, once rot spreads through several posts or the fence line is visibly wandering, full fence replacement is the smarter long-term call. Spot repairs can look cheaper on the fence quote, but not when you are paying again next season.

Quoting removal and installation properly

A serious fence installation estimate is not just a price per linear foot copied from a rate card. Fence installation cost depends on access, demolition difficulty, soil conditions, material choice, height, number of corners, number of fence gates, and whether old concrete footing removal is part of the scope.

Homeowners often ask for fence cost per foot, and it is a fair question. It is also incomplete. A straightforward vinyl fence installer job on open suburban ground is priced differently from a backyard fence installation where every old post is encased in heavy concrete, the crew has to wheel everything through a side gate, and the new line includes a double gate plus a return around a pool.

Good estimating usually separates costs in a way that makes sense to the client. Old fence removal may be priced as part of the overall fence installation, or broken out as a line item. Disposal fees may be included or shown separately. If gate hardware, staining, or custom lattice tops are optional, they should be clearly identified. A detailed fence quote helps the customer compare one local fence company to another without guessing what is missing.

This is where experience shows. A contractor who underprices demolition either has not done enough of it or intends to recover the gap later through change orders. When crews hit buried concrete from an old line of fence posts, the work slows down fast. Digging out twelve inches of loose soil is one thing. Breaking and extracting a footing that is twenty-four inches across and locked into clay is another.

Old fence removal is part demolition, part forensic work

Removing an old fence is rarely just unscrewing panels and stacking lumber. On many properties, the visible fence is only half the system. The rest is hidden in concrete, roots, compacted soil, or prior repairs.



With wood, a crew usually starts by taking down fence panels or rails so the site opens up and posts can be accessed safely. Fasteners snap, rotten boards crumble, and sections that look sound can collapse once tension is released. On older installations, especially those patched over many years, one run may contain a mix of nails, deck screws, carriage bolts, and improvised metal straps.

Chain-link behaves differently. A chain-link fence installer will first relieve the tension from the mesh and remove top rail, line posts, and terminal posts in a sequence that avoids dangerous spring-back. Ornamental metal fence sections may come apart cleanly if they were properly assembled, but older steel can seize at brackets or anchors. A vinyl fence installer often finds brittle sections that crack rather than disengage, especially after years of freeze-thaw exposure.

Concrete footing removal is the stage customers underestimate most. Sometimes the crew can pull the old post and footing together with a machine, especially if access allows for compact equipment. In tighter lots, the concrete has to be exposed, broken, rocked loose, and carried out in pieces. In established neighbourhoods from Toronto to Burlington, backyard access often limits equipment use, so what sounds like a small demolition job becomes skilled manual labour.

Roots complicate things further. Fences are often built along property edges where maples, cedars, and hedges have been growing for decades. A good fence contractor works around significant roots when possible rather than hacking through everything and destabilizing nearby trees. That may mean adjusting post spacing slightly, switching to shorter panel modules, or changing the exact location of a fence post while preserving line and appearance.

Property lines, neighbours, and the importance of getting the line right

A new fence installation can turn sour quickly if fence line planning is loose. One of the most common mistakes is assuming the old fence sat in the correct place. Plenty of older fences were installed by eye, built inside the line to avoid conflict, or shifted over time as posts leaned and replacements were made.

On a shared property line fence, the right approach depends on the owner's goals, local by-laws, and neighbour relations. Some owners want the fence exactly on the line as a good neighbour fence. Others prefer it clearly inside their side so maintenance and decision-making stay simple. Either option can work, but the decision should be deliberate.

In Ontario, local fence companies also need to stay alert to Ontario fence laws and municipal by-laws. Fence permit requirements vary by municipality and by fence type. Height limits can differ for rear yards, front yards, corner lots, and pool enclosures. A pool enclosure contractor has stricter obligations than a standard backyard privacy fence crew because latch heights, self-closing hardware, and climbability rules come into play. A fence height rules issue that seems minor on paper can force a costly rebuild if ignored.

The Line Fences Act also comes up from time to time, especially in disputes over agricultural or rural boundary [Find more information](#) fencing. It is not something every suburban fence installation touches, but any agricultural fence contractor or rural fencing contractor in Ontario should understand when shared responsibility questions arise. In practice, many neighbour issues are solved long before formal processes are necessary, simply by discussing the fence style, finished side orientation, post placement, and gate locations before the work starts.

A careful fencing contractor does not try to act as a land surveyor unless they are one. If the exact line is disputed or unclear, the sensible advice is to confirm it properly before digging. That protects everyone.

Permits and utility locates are not glamorous, but they keep jobs moving

The smoothest jobs are usually the ones where paperwork and locates were sorted early. Permit needs depend on municipality, use, and design. In the GTA, a Brampton fence contractor may be dealing with slightly different local interpretations than a Markham fence contractor or Oakville fence contractor. Corner lots, pool enclosures, and tall security fence installation often trigger more scrutiny than a basic rear-yard wood fence.

Underground locates matter just as much. Gas, hydro, telecom, irrigation, and landscape lighting lines do not always sit where people think they do. A fence company that skips this step is gambling with safety, liability, and the schedule. Even when locates are clear, crews need to dig carefully near marked zones. That can slow production, but it is part of competent work.

Commercial and industrial jobs raise the stakes. An industrial fence contractor installing around a warehouse in Richmond Hill or a commercial fence contractor managing a site in Vaughan may be working near service feeds, security conduits, or controlled access points. An automatic gate installer also has to coordinate power, operator pads, and safety loops or photo eyes. Those details are not visible in the finished fence, but they separate a durable system from a callback waiting to happen.

Setting the new foundation right

Once demolition is complete and the line is confirmed, the quality of the new installation depends heavily on the posts. Fence posts are the structural backbone of the project, and the difference between a fence that looks good

for twenty years and one that starts leaning in three often comes down to post depth, spacing, alignment, and footing quality.

In Southern Ontario, frost is a real design factor. Posts need to be set deep enough for the local conditions and the fence type. Taller privacy fence installation, heavy fence gates, and exposed wind zones all demand stronger foundations. The soil matters too. Sandy areas drain differently from dense clay. Fill left from a new subdivision behaves differently from undisturbed native soil. An experienced wood fence installer or vinyl fence installer adjusts technique accordingly, rather than pretending every yard is the same.

Concrete is commonly used for footings, but the size and shape should match the load. A hinge post for a wide gate needs more support than a simple line post. Commercial security fence installation often requires heavier terminal posts and more robust concrete foundations than a decorative residential run. For ornamental metal fence or perimeter fence installation on sloped grades, layout precision becomes especially important because small errors compound visually from section to section.

This is also the point where good crews make quiet decisions that the customer may never notice but will benefit from later. They will crown concrete properly, keep wood off direct soil contact where possible, leave sensible drainage around posts, and check lines repeatedly rather than trusting the first string. Those habits do not look dramatic on day one. They show up years later when the fence is still straight.

Material choice changes the installation method

Not all fence materials behave the same, and local fence companies that work across several categories usually have different crews or at least different install routines for each.

Wood remains popular for privacy, warmth, and flexibility. It is often the go-to choice for backyard fence installation in established neighbourhoods because it can be customized around awkward grades and mature landscaping. A wood fence installer has to think about post species, rail fastening, board spacing, shrinkage, and whether the client wants a full privacy face or airflow through slight gaps. Wood also asks more of the owner later, especially if they want it to keep a fresh appearance.

Vinyl is attractive to clients seeking a low maintenance fence. It stays clean-looking with basic care and avoids the staining cycle of wood. But vinyl depends on a very accurate framework. If posts are out of square, the fence panels telegraph every mistake. Cold weather can also make handling less forgiving, so an experienced vinyl fence installer plans cuts and assembly carefully.

Chain-link remains one of the most practical choices for security, pets, utilities, schools, and large commercial areas. It is cost-effective, durable, and fast to install over long runs. A chain-link fence installer working on a commercial or industrial site may add privacy slats, barbed extensions where permitted, or custom gate configurations. For homes, black chain-link has become a common middle ground between budget and appearance.

Ornamental metal fence carries a different expectation. Clients choose it for curb appeal, visibility, and long service life. It is common around front yards, institutional properties, and some pool enclosures. Precision matters more because visual inconsistencies stand out immediately. The same is true for automatic gate installer work, where operator alignment and hardware tolerances need to be exact.

Gates are usually the part that determines whether the contractor was careful

Most people judge a fence by how it looks. Contractors often judge it by the gates.

Fence gates combine movement, weight, weather, and user abuse. Kids swing on them. Delivery drivers leave them open. Snowbanks push against them. Pets test the bottom gap. If the posts are weak or the hardware is undersized, a gate starts telling on the whole installation within months.

A reliable fence contractor treats gate openings as structural points, not afterthoughts. That means accounting for latch clearance, seasonal movement, grade changes, and the way the gate will actually be used. A narrow garden gate, a double driveway gate, and a powered access gate each need different framing and hardware logic. On commercial jobs, security fence installation often includes panic hardware, keypad access, closers, or integration with an automatic gate installer's scope.

Homeowners are often surprised by how much of the fence installation estimate can be tied to gates. That is normal. Gates are labor-heavy and hardware-heavy, and they demand stronger posts. If a quote prices them almost the same as a basic panel section, it is worth asking how they are being built.

What a smooth replacement project looks like in practice

When a local fence company is organized, the project has a rhythm that feels calm to the customer, even when the work itself is physically demanding. The crew arrives with the layout already understood. Materials are staged with purpose. Removal happens in manageable sections so the site never becomes a chaotic debris field. New posts are installed to a controlled line, then rails or panels follow once the structure is ready. Gates are hung late enough that alignment is reliable.

On a typical residential fence replacement in the GTA, the timeline may range from a day or two for a short straightforward run to several days for a larger yard with demolition, custom gates, and difficult access. Weather can stretch that, especially if heavy rain collapses open holes or turns excavation into mud work. Commercial schedules vary even more because other trades, access controls, and safety requirements often overlap.

Customers from Whitby to Burlington often ask whether they should stay home during the job. Usually, it is helpful for someone to be reachable, especially on day one when any buried surprises or layout questions can be resolved quickly. Beyond that, a good fence installation company should be able to proceed without constant oversight.

The local advantage is not just proximity

There is a reason many owners prefer a local fence company instead of the cheapest name they find online. Local crews usually know the soil, the by-laws, the seasonal timing, and the common property layouts in their service area. A Mississauga fence contractor has likely worked around townhouse blocks with narrow access. A Vaughan fence contractor may be familiar with larger estate lots and sloped rear yards. A Markham fence contractor or Richmond Hill fence contractor might routinely deal with mature landscaping and older neighbourhood boundaries.

That familiarity helps with estimating, scheduling, and problem-solving. It also helps after the job. If a gate needs adjustment after a hard winter, dealing with a contractor who actually works nearby tends to be easier than chasing a company that sold aggressively and disappeared.

This does not mean every local operator is excellent. It means there is real value in choosing a fencing contractor whose work you can verify in your area and whose quote reflects local conditions rather than generic assumptions.

What homeowners and property managers should ask before signing

The best conversations happen before work begins. Ask how old fence removal is being handled, whether concrete footing removal is included, how property line questions are managed, and what assumptions are built into the fence quote. Ask what fence materials the company recommends for your site, not just which options they sell most often. Ask how they build gates. Ask about post depth, disposal, timeline, and how they deal with hidden conditions.

For commercial projects, add questions about site safety, phasing, and coordination with other trades. For pool work, confirm that the contractor understands the enclosure requirements in your municipality. For farms or rural properties, an agricultural fence contractor should be comfortable discussing livestock pressure, wire tension, brace assemblies, and long-run maintenance.

A trustworthy answer is usually specific, not flashy. It sounds like someone who has seen the ground cave in around an old footing, dealt with a neighbour worried about the shared property line fence, and rebuilt enough sagging gates to know where shortcuts lead.

The finished fence should solve problems, not just look new

A successful fence replacement is not merely a cosmetic upgrade. It should improve privacy, define the property boundary fence more clearly, secure children or pets, reduce maintenance, and stand up better to Ontario weather. Whether the job is handled by a Toronto fence contractor, an Oshawa fence contractor, an Oakville fence contractor, or any other GTA fence company, the standard is the same. The fence should be straight, solid, compliant, and suited to how the property is actually used.

That is what experienced fence installers aim for. They remove the old fence thoroughly, manage the hidden mess without drama, and build the new fence on a foundation that makes sense for the site. The style matters. The colour matters. The price matters. But the real value comes from the parts most people never photograph: careful layout, honest demolition, deep posts, sound footings, and gates that still close cleanly after a February freeze.

When those details are handled well, the new fence does more than replace the old one. It resets the edge of the property for the next couple of decades, and that is the part of the job that professionals take seriously.

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Fence Installation FAQs for Ontario Homeowners

How much does fence installation cost in Ontario?

Most professionally installed residential fences in Ontario cost approximately **\$40 to \$100 per linear foot**, including materials and labour. A typical 100-foot fence may cost about **\$4,000 to \$10,000**. Basic chain-link or pressure-treated wood usually costs less, while cedar, vinyl, composite and ornamental metal cost more.

How much does a fence cost per linear foot?

Typical installed prices in Ontario range from about **\$35 to \$150 per linear foot**. Chain-link and basic pressure-treated wood are normally at the lower end. Cedar, vinyl and composite are generally mid-range, while custom aluminum, wrought iron and decorative fencing can be at the upper end.

How long does it take to install a fence?

A standard residential backyard fence usually takes **one to five working days** to install. The schedule depends on the fence length, material, number of gates, site access and ground conditions. Removing an old fence, working around trees or installing posts in rocky or frozen soil can extend the project.

Do I need a permit to build a fence in Toronto?

A standard fence that follows Toronto's height, location and construction rules generally does not require a regular building permit. Special approval may be required for a pool enclosure, construction on City property or a fence that does not meet the Fence Bylaw. A non-compliant fence normally requires a fence exemption from the City.

How tall can a fence be in the GTA?

Fence-height rules differ between Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton, Vaughan, Markham and other GTA municipalities. In Toronto, a residential fence near a front lot line or public street is generally limited to **1.2 metres, or about 4 feet**. Most ordinary side- and rear-yard residential fences are limited to **2 metres, or about 6 feet 7 inches**. Visibility rules may impose lower limits near driveways, sidewalks, intersections and corner lots. Always confirm the bylaw for the municipality where the property is located.

Can a fence be built on the property line?

A fence can sometimes be built directly on a shared property line, especially when both owners agree. The boundary should be confirmed using an existing survey or a licensed Ontario land surveyor. Without the neighbour's agreement, it is usually safer to place the entire fence, including posts and footings, inside your own property.

Who pays for a shared fence in Ontario?

Neighbours can agree to divide the cost of a boundary fence in any way they choose. Ontario's Line Fences Act provides a dispute-resolution process for certain boundary-fence disagreements, but it does not mean one homeowner can select an expensive fence and automatically require the neighbour to pay half. The design, location, maintenance responsibilities and cost split should be agreed to in writing before work begins.

Which side of the fence should face the neighbour?

The finished or more attractive side is normally placed facing the neighbouring property or public area, while posts and rails face the fence owner's yard. Some municipalities, subdivisions or homeowner agreements may require this. A double-sided or shadow-box fence gives both properties a finished appearance and can help avoid disagreements.

What type of fence lasts the longest?

Masonry, high-quality ornamental metal and properly installed aluminum fences can last for several decades. Aluminum is particularly durable because it does not rust. Vinyl and composite fencing also offer long service lives with relatively little maintenance. Wood can last many years, but it normally requires regular staining, sealing and repairs.

What is the cheapest fence to install?

Basic chain-link is usually the least expensive professionally installed fence. Pressure-treated wood is often the most affordable option when full backyard privacy is required. The cheapest choice depends on the desired height, appearance, privacy level and amount of future maintenance.

What fence material is best for Ontario weather?

Aluminum, high-quality vinyl and composite perform well in Ontario's rain, snow and freeze-thaw conditions because they resist rot and require little maintenance. Cedar is a strong natural-wood option, while pressure-

treated lumber offers good value when it is properly installed and maintained. Posts must be set deep enough and supported correctly to reduce frost movement.

Is it better to repair or replace an old fence?

Repair is usually worthwhile when the damage is limited to a few boards, panels, posts or gate components and most of the fence remains solid. Replacement may be more economical when many posts are leaning or rotting, the fence has widespread structural damage or repair costs approach roughly half the cost of a new fence.

How do I measure the length of a new fence?

Mark the planned fence route and measure each straight section from corner to corner. Add the measurements together to calculate the total linear footage. Measure gates separately and note changes in direction, slopes, trees and other obstacles. Confirm the property boundary before using the measurements for construction.

What factors change a fence installation quote?

Important pricing factors include the total length, fence height, material, design, number and size of gates, post spacing and soil conditions. Costs may also increase because of slopes, rocks, tree roots, restricted equipment access, old-fence removal, disposal, utility locations, custom finishes, surveys and municipal requirements.

What time of year is best for fence installation?

Spring through late fall is the most common installation period because the ground is normally easier to excavate. Late spring and summer can have longer contractor lead times. Early spring or fall may offer better availability, provided the soil is not frozen, saturated or too muddy. Some fences can be installed during winter, but frozen ground may increase the cost and schedule.

Does a new fence add property value?

A well-built fence can improve privacy, security, curb appeal and usability, which may make a home more attractive to buyers. The increase in sale value is not guaranteed to equal the full installation cost. Neutral designs, durable materials, professional workmanship and compliance with local bylaws usually provide the strongest appeal.

Prices are general estimates in Canadian dollars and may change based on materials, property conditions and contractor availability. Fence bylaws vary by municipality. Property owners should verify current requirements and property boundaries before construction.

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