

Let's be direct. If you cannot name the crew that will build your fence, not the company, the crew, then you have not finished hiring anyone. The company name is on the truck. The crew is what shows up at seven in the morning with augers and a plan, and the gap between those two things is where most fence problems are born.

This article is a question list for property owners in Toronto and the surrounding municipalities, Mississauga, Brampton, Vaughan, Markham, Richmond Hill, Pickering, Ajax, Whitby, Oshawa, Oakville, Burlington, Milton, Hamilton, Caledon, Aurora, Newmarket, organized by theme. For each question you get two things: why it matters in this region, and what a good answer sounds like. Because the questions to ask before hiring are only half the work. The other half is knowing what you are listening for.

Questions to Ask Before Hiring About the Crew and the Trucks

Start with the people, because the people are the project. These questions separate the crew that quotes from the crew that builds:

- Who will actually be on site doing the work? A good answer names the crew or the foreman and their experience. A vague answer, "my guys", is a warning. The crew that measured your yard is not always the crew that builds your fence, and the gap matters.
- How many people work on a typical install of this size? Enough to move material efficiently, few enough to stay coordinated. The number matters less than the contractor's ability to say it.
- Is the crew your own crew, or subcontractors? There is nothing wrong with subs, but you should know who is responsible for what, and verify the coverage and licensing details with the contractor before work starts.
- How long has this crew worked together? A crew that has built fences together for years moves like a machine. A crew assembled last week moves like a conversation.
- Who is the foreman, and how do I reach them during the job? A good answer names a person. That person is your point of contact when a question comes up mid-project, and knowing who it is before day one saves a week of phone tag.

A good answer to any of these is specific and immediate. The contractor should be [Click here for info](#) able to describe the crew the way you describe your own coworkers: what they do, how they work together, who leads them. The follow-up worth asking is "can I meet the foreman before the start date?" The ones who say yes are the ones with nothing to hide.

A related question for commercial projects: how many crews does the company run, and how do they split work between residential and commercial jobs? A fence around a parking lot is a different operation from a backyard install, and you want the crew that does your kind of work, not the crew that happens to be free.

Questions About Materials and the GTA Climate

This region is harder on fences than most owners give it credit for. Freeze-thaw cycles work the ground all winter, heavy snow loads pile against panels, and wind comes off the lake in gusts that find every loose latch. Ask the questions that acknowledge the climate:

- How deep will the posts go, and does the depth change with the soil? In heavy clay, common across much of the GTA, posts need to sit below the frost line to stay straight through the heave. A good answer describes the soil on your property, not a universal number.

- How does this material hold up to snow load and wind? A good answer is honest about limits: wider panel spacing, bracing on exposed corners, and gates built to stay square under wind. A bad answer is "it'll be fine."
- How will the material handle sun and salt? Cedar grays, vinyl can chalk, and metal near the lake, in Oakville, Burlington, parts of Mississauga, faces salt air that chews through weak finishes. A good answer names the finish and why it was chosen for this location.
- What happens on a ravine lot or a slope? If your property drops toward a ravine, or sits on fill, the questions about drainage and erosion belong in the conversation before the estimate.
- What maintenance will the fence need, and what kind? A good answer treats maintenance as part of the design conversation. Wood needs a plan. Vinyl and aluminum need almost none, and the price reflects it.

If your property is in a newer subdivision built on fill, ask about settling: how does the contractor handle a fence line that moves as the ground settles over the first few years? The honest answer involves adjustments and follow-up visits. The dishonest answer is a shrug.

Follow-up: "Which of your recent projects is in a similar climate exposure, and how did it hold up over a winter or two?" The answer tells you whether they are speaking from experience or from a brochure.

Questions About the Property Line and the Neighbor

In the GTA, most residential fences are shared fences, and the shared conversation is where the questions get personal. Start with your own property:

- Do you have a survey, and have you confirmed the boundary? A good answer to this one is "yes" from you, not from the contractor. Verify the line with a surveyor or your municipality before anyone digs, and do not assume the old fence marks the boundary.
- Have you talked to the neighbor? If the fence is on a shared line, the neighbor conversation belongs before the quote. A good answer involves a conversation that happened, not one you are planning.
- How do you handle shared-line builds? A good contractor describes the process: who they talk to, how they confirm agreement, and what happens if the neighbor declines.
- Which side faces which property? The good side of a fence faces the neighbor. Deciding that with words beats discovering it with feelings.

For townhouse owners and anyone in a condo corporation, add one more: what do the corporation rules require? The answer may not be yours to decide, and [pool enclosure contractor](#) checking before the quote saves a very awkward conversation after it. Follow-up: "If the neighbor changes their mind mid-project, what happens?" The answer should include a pause in the work, not a fight.

Questions About Municipal Rules and Utilities

One of the realities of the GTA is that the rules are not one set of rules. Toronto has its own requirements, and Mississauga, Brampton, Vaughan, Markham, and the rest each run their own books on fences, heights, and setbacks. Ask the contractor how they handle the local rules, then verify the current requirements with your own municipality. A good contractor will not mind being checked, and the ones who mind are telling you something.

- Are there height limits or other requirements that apply to this property? A good answer names the local rules for your municipality specifically, not "the usual rules." Then confirm with the municipality yourself.
- Does this fence trigger any approvals? A pool enclosure, a commercial perimeter, or a fence near a corner can have different requirements than a standard backyard line. Verify with the municipality before committing.

- What about easements and hydro corridors? If your property backs onto a hydro corridor or carries an easement, the rules for what can be built there are not the normal rules. A good contractor knows to ask, and you should too.
- Who arranges the utility locates? The answer should be a process: the contractor calls, the locate happens, the digging starts after. Confirm the details with your local utility if you have any doubt.
- Do the rules differ for a commercial property? Parking lots, strip malls, and industrial yards face different requirements and often a longer approvals path. Verify with the municipality, and ask the contractor which approvals they handle and which you own.

Follow-up: "Can you tell me what changed in the last year or two that affects fences in this municipality?" The ones who answer are the ones who work there every day.

Questions About Timing and the Season

Timing is a real conversation in this region, because the season does the talking. Spring thaw brings a surge of fence work and a backlog that pushes start dates. Summer books out. Late-fall installs race the ground freezing. Ask about it directly:

- How far out are you booking? A good answer is a time frame, and the follow-up is worth asking: how firm is it?
- What happens if the weather pushes the job? A good answer describes the plan for rain delays, frozen ground, and the schedule slip that follows.
- How long will the actual work take once it starts? A good answer breaks it into phases: posts, panels, gates, cleanup, instead of one round number.
- Is there a better time of year for this project than the one I am asking about? A good contractor tells you the truth, even when the truth is "wait until the ground settles."

Ask what the crew does in the shoulder seasons, late fall and early spring, when the ground is cold and the schedule is thin. A contractor who works year-round has a different operation than one who disappears in November, and that difference shows up in how they talk about your timeline.

The follow-up for all of these is the same: what happens if the date slips? Owners who ask it once, at signing, never need to ask it again in anger.

Questions About Cleanup, Warranty, and the Follow-Up

The fence is the visible part of the project. The invisible parts are what happens before the crew leaves and after the truck is gone:

- What does cleanup include? A good answer covers daily tidiness and the final pass: material scraps, fasteners, and the state the yard is left in. Ask when cleanup happens, at the end of each day, at the end of the job, or both.
- What happens to the old fence? Removal, hauling, and disposal are real work. Ask whether they are in the price, and get the answer in writing.
- What does the warranty cover, and what are its terms? A good answer is specific: what is covered, for how long, and what the claim process looks like. Get it in writing and verify the details with the contractor before you sign.

- What should I do if a panel works loose or a gate sags after the first winter? A good answer is a process: call this number, here is what happens. Settling happens; the question is whether the contractor treats it as part of the job.
- How do I reach you a year from now? Companies grow, move, and change crews. Ask who to call, and write down the answer.

Reading the Answers

The questions matter, but the reading matters more. A good answer is specific and immediate, and it should match what you see on the site visit. A bad answer is a vague phrase delivered with confidence. Trust your ear: if an answer sounds rehearsed but empty, ask once more for the specific version, and watch whether the contractor can produce it.

Notice what they ask you back. The best contractors interview the owner as much as the owner interviews them, with questions about drainage, about the neighbor, about how you use the yard. Those questions are the sign of a professional who has learned that the fence is built for a life, not for a line on a plan.

And when the answers are good, write them down. The notes are the contract you actually hold.

The Questions Are the Easy Part

None of the questions to ask before hiring in this article are clever. They are the obvious questions, asked at the right time, in the right order, by an owner who is paying attention. In Toronto and across the GTA, the fence you build will stand through snow, thaw, wind, and the occasional neighbor dispute, and the only part of the project you control completely is the conversation that happens before the first post is set.

Ask the questions. Listen to the answers. Write them down. Then let the crew do what they do best.

