

You probably assume the fence goes up the week after you sign. That is the single most expensive assumption in the fencing business, because it is wrong far more often than it is right. Between the spring thaw, the summer backlog, material orders, and the weather, a fence project has a rhythm all its own, and owners who understand it get built on time while owners who don't spend July staring at a hole in the yard.

The good news is that scheduling, lead times, and project communication are manageable. They are not mysteries; they are a process with predictable stages. This guide walks the whole thing from the first phone call to the final walkthrough, so you know what to expect, what to ask, and what to put in writing.

Start here: the calendar is the first thing a good contractor thinks about, and it should be the second thing you think about.

Scheduling, Lead Times, and Project Communication Begin Before the First Call

By the time most owners reach out, they have already lost a month. The ideal time to start researching a fence is the season before you need it, in the fall for a spring build, in the winter for a summer build. That sounds ridiculous until you realize what actually drives the timeline: the best crews book up, materials get ordered in batches, and the municipal processes you need, like permits, locates, and surveys, run on their own clocks.

A realistic sequence looks like this:

1. Figure out what you want and walk your property line yourself, so your first call to a contractor is specific rather than vague.
2. Get your survey or property pins located, and settle the neighbor conversation early if the fence touches a shared boundary.
3. Call at least three contractors in the late fall or winter, when crews are slower and estimators have time to talk.
4. Confirm permit requirements with your municipality and file early if one is needed, because approval time is rarely zero.
5. Book the contractor before the spring rush, even if the build itself happens months later.

Owners who follow that sequence are the ones who get April dates. Owners who call in June asking for a fence before the long weekend are the ones who hear a lot of apologies.

Reading a Contractor's Schedule Honestly

"We can start in about three weeks" is not a date. It is an estimate built on assumptions about weather, crew availability, material deliveries, and the jobs already ahead of you. Learning to read that sentence honestly will save you a season of frustration.

Ask what the three weeks depends on. A straight answer sounds like this: "We have two jobs ahead of you, cedar is running about ten <https://s3.us-west-004.backblazeb2.com/gta-fencing-company/fence-installation/index.html> days from the mill, and we don't dig in heavy rain. If the weather holds, you're looking at mid-month. I'll confirm by the week before." A vague answer sounds like this: "Yeah, three weeks, we'll call you." One of those is a schedule. The other is a hope.

Spring in the GTA is the hardest season to schedule. Thawing ground, clay soils that turn to mud, and late snow all push jobs around, and the contractors who work through it are juggling constantly. Ask how they handle weather

delays: do they roll the start, or do they slot you into gaps? The answer tells you how honest their original date was.

What a Realistic Lead Time Looks Like

Lead time is not one number. It is a stack of them: time to confirm the quote, time to order materials, time for the permit and locates, time for the crew to arrive, and time to actually build. A fence that takes two days to install can still take six weeks from contract to completion, and none of that is the contractor being lazy.

Expect the material order to sit at the top of the stack. Fencing suppliers run on their own schedules, and a popular board or panel can be back-ordered just like anything else. Ask the contractor what they order, how far out it is, and whether they confirm the material is in hand before they promise you a start date. Crews that show up with materials already staged are crews that start on time.

The permit and locate stage is the one owners forget. If your municipality requires approval, or if buried lines need locating, that work happens before digging, and it is rarely instant. Factor it into your expectations, and ask the contractor who chases these items. The answer should be a name, not a shrug.

Locking the Start Date

When the estimator gives you a date, get it in writing, and get the caveats in writing too. A good contract says what happens if the start slips, how weather is handled, and what happens to your deposit if the project drags. A contract that names a week rather than a day, with a commitment to confirm a precise date a few days out, is honest. A contract that promises a date and nothing else is a negotiation waiting to happen.

Ask these questions before you sign:

- Is this date guaranteed, or is it subject to weather and material availability?
- How much notice will I get before the crew arrives?
- What happens if my permit is delayed, does my date move, or does the contractor work around it?
- What is the deposit, and is it refundable if the start date slips past a reasonable window?

Notice what is missing from that list: the finish date. Contractors rarely commit to a completion date for a fence, because the weather owns the last week of every job. What you want instead is a start date you can trust and a build time the contractor can stand behind.

Communication Before the Job: Who, How, and How Fast

The best predictor of a smooth project is a single, reachable point of contact. On a small crew that might be the owner-operator himself. On a larger company it might be a project coordinator who is not the person swinging the hammer. Either is fine. What is not fine is not knowing who to call.

Set the rules of the road early:

- Ask how the contractor communicates, by calls, texts, or email, and which one gets the fastest response.
- Ask when the crew works, and whether the project manager visits the site or runs the job by phone.
- Ask what happens when you have a question mid-job, and agree on a response-time expectation that feels reasonable.
- Ask to be told in advance about anything that changes the price or the schedule, rather than discovering it on the invoice.

One more thing: write down the agreed scope before the crew arrives. The fence height, the gate locations, the post spacing, the finish, all of it. A page of notes that both of you have seen is worth more than a dozen phone calls after the fact.

One request belongs on every owner's list: ask for proof of insurance and WSIB coverage before the crew arrives, and verify the documents with the provider rather than taking a photocopy at face value. A crew working without proper coverage puts the property owner on the hook for injuries and damage, and that risk is yours no matter how the contract is worded.

During the Job: The Day-to-Day That Decides Everything

Fence installation is fast once it starts, and most of the communication problems happen in the first two days. That is when the crew discovers the ground is rockier than expected, the neighbor's shed is closer to the line than the survey suggested, or the soil is wetter than anyone planned. Small surprises are normal. The question is whether you hear about them or find out later.

Good crews flag changes the day they happen. They explain what they found, what they propose, and what it means for the price and the timeline, before they do it, not after. If a crew starts improvising without telling you, that is the moment to call the office and get the project manager on site.

If your fence needs an inspection, schedule it like a meeting. Ask who **pool enclosure contractor** books it, what the inspector needs, like access to the line, the gate open, the site clear, and what happens if the inspection fails. A failed inspection is not the end of the world; a failed inspection you hear about a week later is.



The Walkthrough and What Comes After

The final walkthrough is your last chance to catch things cheaply. Walk the whole line slowly, open every gate, check the posts at the corners, and look at the finish in daylight. Write down anything that is off, a gate that sags, a panel that leans, hardware that was not set, and get a commitment on when it will be corrected.

Then ask the questions that most owners forget:

- What maintenance does this fence need in the first year, and what happens if I do nothing?
- Who do I call if something shifts after the spring thaw, and how do I reach them?
- What does the warranty actually cover, and what does it exclude?
- Who handles it if a dispute with the neighbor or the city comes up after the build?

The last one matters more than people think. A fence built in October that heaves in March is a different problem than a fence built wrong, and the contractor who answers the phone in both cases is the one you want. Confirm the warranty terms in writing and keep your copy somewhere you will find it.

The Short Version

Here is the whole guide in one paragraph. Start looking a season early. Read every "three weeks" as a hope until it is confirmed in writing. Treat the material order, the permit, and the locates as part of the timeline, not obstacles to it. Lock a start date, agree on a point of contact, and write down the scope. Expect surprises on day one, and expect to hear about them the day they happen. Walk the finished fence slowly and get fixes committed in writing.

Owners who treat scheduling, lead times, and project communication as part of the project, not as paperwork around it, end up with the fence they wanted, built when it was supposed to be built, with their sanity intact. That is the whole point. The fence is the easy part; the calendar and the conversation are the project.