



A CITY-BY-CITY ONTARIO GUIDE

Your neighbour built it. Do you owe half?
The Fence Bill Guide
Ontario Fence Cost-Sharing, City by City

Verified bylaws, notice periods, and cost formulas for over
25 Ontario municipalities, with the gaps flagged honestly.

Explained simply — the way I'd tell a friend.

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What's inside this guide

Skim the region you live in now. Come back to it the day an invoice actually shows up.

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01



Read this first

Your neighbour replaces the shared fence without asking, then sends you a message: the fence cost \$8,000, your half is \$4,000. Do you actually owe that? The honest answer is: it depends entirely on which Ontario municipality you're in, and the number is very often lower than the invoice suggests.

"Neighbours split the fence cost 50/50" isn't one universal rule. It's a starting assumption that well over 400 different Ontario municipalities have each written their own specific version of, some opting out of the provincial default entirely and writing their own formula, others leaving the provincial rule in place untouched. This guide verifies, city by city, what each one actually says, straight from the bylaw text, not a summary of a summary.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Find your region in sections 05 through 09. Read section 03 first regardless, "basic cost" is the concept that shows up in nearly every formula in this guide and explains why your share is so often less than half of what was actually spent.

IMPORTANT

I'm a realtor, not a lawyer. This guide is general education, not legal advice, and bylaws change. Every entry here reflects a specific verification pass and should be confirmed directly with your municipality before you rely on it for an actual dispute.

IF YOU REMEMBER NOTHING ELSE**The 3 things that matter most**

-  This is genuinely local law. Two neighbouring cities can run opposite systems, confirmed in this guide for Kitchener and Waterloo specifically.
-  Where a formula exists, it's almost always the lesser of 50% of actual cost or 50% of "basic cost," a defined, much cheaper reference fence, not simply half of whatever was actually spent.
-  Process matters as much as the formula. Most bylaws require written notice and a chance to respond before a bill is enforceable at all.

02



The idea behind the rule

Every entry in this guide traces back to one piece of provincial legislation, and understanding it explains why the municipal picture is so patchwork.

IN SIMPLE WORDS

Ontario's Line Fences Act sets a default, province-wide process for shared boundary fence disputes, using "fence-viewers" appointed by the local municipality to settle disagreements. Under the Act, any municipality can pass its own bylaw opting out of this default and replacing it with its own local rules, notice periods, and cost formulas. Many have. Many others simply haven't, which means the original provincial fence-viewer process is still technically what applies there today.

That single decision, opt out and write a local formula, or leave the provincial default in place, is the fork in the road behind every entry in sections 05 through 09.

03



The "basic cost" concept

This is the single idea worth understanding before reading a single municipality entry, because it's the reason your actual share is so often less than the half your neighbour first quotes you.

IN SIMPLE WORDS

Most municipal formulas don't simply split the real invoice in half. They cap your obligation at 50% of "basic cost," a defined, much cheaper reference fence, typically a standard 4-foot chain-link fence, regardless of what was actually installed. If your neighbour chooses an \$8,000 cedar privacy fence but a basic chain-link equivalent would cost \$3,000, your share in a basic-cost municipality is generally 50% of \$3,000, or \$1,500, not 50% of \$8,000.

Your neighbour is free to choose a nicer fence. In most municipalities, they aren't free to make you pay for the upgrade.

WHERE THIS VARIES

Some municipalities cap you at the lesser of 50% of basic cost or 50% of actual cost, meaning you get whichever number is lower. Others, like Oakville, define basic cost as materials only, excluding labour entirely, an even lower number. A few municipalities skip the basic-cost concept altogether and simply split actual cost 50/50 once both sides agree in writing. Which model your city uses is precisely what sections 05 through 09 confirm.

04



How to read this guide

This guide draws a hard line between what's been confirmed against actual bylaw text and what hasn't, rather than presenting a guess as a fact.

- ✓ **Confirmed entries** cite the specific bylaw number and were checked against the bylaw's own text or the municipality's official published guidance.
- ⚠ **Entries flagged "confirm the exact figure,"** have a confirmed bylaw and a confirmed general approach, but the precise percentage or comparison method wasn't independently verified word for word, treat the stated formula as a strong starting expectation, not a guarantee.
- ❓ **Municipalities in the "confirm directly" list** in section 09 didn't turn up a confirmed cost-sharing bylaw in this pass. That doesn't necessarily mean one doesn't exist, only that it wasn't found and verified here.

05



Toronto

Toronto stands apart from the rest of this guide because it took the opposite path from most of its neighbours.

IN SIMPLE WORDS

Toronto opted out of the Line Fences Act entirely in 2018, under By-law 641-2018, Chapter 447 (Fences), and never replaced it with its own cost-sharing formula. There is no municipal number to point to. A genuine dispute over a shared fence in Toronto goes to civil court, or to free mediation through TNG Community Services, rather than through any municipal bylaw process.

This makes Toronto simple to explain but harder to resolve informally: without a formula either side can point to, a friendly conversation and a written agreement matters even more than in a city with a clear bylaw percentage to fall back on.

06



Peel & Halton

Every municipality in this region has opted out of the provincial default and written its own formula, mostly variations on the basic-cost model from section 03.

Municipality	Bylaw & notice period	What the neighbour typically owes
Mississauga	Division Fence By-law 0075-2004. 14 days written notice.	The lesser of 50% of basic cost or 50% of actual cost, once quotes are exchanged.
Brampton	Division Fence By-law 172-2006. 14 business days written notice.	The lesser of 50% of basic cost or 50% of actual cost, once quotes are exchanged.
Caledon	Division Fence By-law 2021-14. 20 business days written notice.	50% of the lowest quote considered, generally not less than 50% of basic cost once the neighbour submits their own quotes.
Oakville	Division Fence By-law 2023-076. 14 business days written notice.	50% of basic cost, defined in the bylaw as materials only, not labour.
Halton Hills	By-law 2002-0060, amended by By-law 2026-0031 (April 2026). 14 business days written notice.	50% of basic cost. A recent change, the town only opted out of the provincial Act in 2026.
Milton	Fence Apportionment By-law 97-2005. Urban residential areas only. 14 days written notice.	The lesser of 50% of basic cost or 50% of actual cost. Rural and agricultural areas still fall under the provincial Line Fences Act.
Burlington	Division Fence By-law 024-2003.	A cost-sharing bylaw is confirmed to exist; confirm the exact formula directly with the city before relying on a number.

INSIDER TIP

Notice periods in this region range from 14 to 20 business days depending on the city. Confirm your specific city's notice period before assuming a shorter or longer window than your municipality actually allows.

07



York & Durham

This region shows the widest range of approaches in the GTA, confirmed opt-outs with clear formulas, cities that opted out but stop short of arbitrating cost, and at least one bylaw with two entirely different formulas depending on whether it's new construction or a repair.

Municipality	Bylaw & notice period	What the neighbour typically owes
Vaughan	Fence Apportionment of Costs By-law 175-93. 14 days written notice.	50% of basic cost. Disputes go to Small Claims Court or the Superior Court of Justice, not a municipal tribunal.
Markham	Fence Bylaw 277-97. 14 days written notice.	The city's guidance caps a neighbour's share at basic cost for a 4-foot chain-link fence; confirm the exact comparison method with the city.
Richmond Hill	Fence Bylaw (Chapter 973, height; Chapter 971, Fence Arbitrations).	A formal arbitration process exists; confirm the current cost formula directly with the city.
Aurora	No cost-arbitration bylaw confirmed.	The town does not arbitrate cost disputes; unresolved disagreements go to civil court.
Newmarket	Opted out, with a cost-sharing bylaw.	Uses a quote-exchange model: the initiating owner provides written quotes, the neighbour may submit their own within a set window before a split is set.
King	Opted out, with a cost-sharing bylaw.	Follows the standard basic-cost model used across the region; confirm the exact percentage with the township.
Ajax	Fence Cost Sharing By-law 37-2017. 14 days written notice.	New construction: the lesser of 50% of basic cost or 50% of actual cost. Reconstruction or repair: a flat 50/50 split of actual cost instead.
Whitby	Division Fence By-law 3657-95. 14 days written notice.	The lesser of 50% of basic cost or 50% of actual cost.
Oshawa	Fence By-law 77-97. 14 days written notice.	New construction: the lesser of 50% of basic or actual cost. Reconstruction or maintenance: a flat 50/50 split.
Pickering	Fence Cost Sharing By-law 6944/09.	New construction: 50% of basic cost outright, not compared to actual. Reconstruction: a flat 50/50 split of actual cost.
Clarington	Fence By-law and companion Fence Cost Sharing By-law. 14 days notice by registered mail.	Basic cost of a 4-foot chain-link fence; where owners agree in writing, 50% of actual cost instead. Enforced through the Provincial Offences Act.
Uxbridge	Division Fence Cost Sharing By-law.	With written agreement, each owner pays 50% of actual cost; owners may also agree to any other proportion.
Brock	Opted out, with a cost-sharing bylaw.	Uses the same quote-exchange model as Newmarket.

THE WRINKLE WORTH KNOWING

Several bylaws in this region, Ajax, Oshawa, and Pickering among them, use one formula for brand-new fences and a completely different flat 50/50 split for repairing or reconstructing an existing one. Check which situation actually applies before assuming the "basic cost" cap protects you, it may not, if this is a repair rather than new construction.

CONFIRM DIRECTLY

Scugog, East Gwillimbury, Whitchurch-Stouffville, and Georgina did not turn up a confirmed cost-sharing bylaw in this pass. See section 10 for how to check your own municipality.

08



Hamilton & Waterloo Region

This region contains the single most interesting contrast in the whole guide: three cities that touch each other's borders, running three completely different systems.

Municipality	Bylaw & notice period	What the neighbour typically owes
Hamilton	Cost of Division Fences By-law 08-018.	A 4-foot chain-link fence is split 50/50. Anything nicer is by private agreement only, the city does not arbitrate the upgrade cost.
Waterloo (city)	Apportion the Cost of Fences by-law.	The lesser of 50% of basic cost or 50% of actual cost.
Kitchener	No cost-sharing opt-out bylaw confirmed. Municipal Code Chapter 630 governs height only.	Falls back to the provincial Line Fences Act and its fence-viewer arbitration process, not a municipal formula.
Cambridge	By-law 195-12 (opts out of the Line Fences Act) with companion cost bylaw 130-14.	Follows the standard basic-cost model used across the region; confirm the exact percentage with the city.
Guelph	No cost-arbitration bylaw confirmed.	The city does not arbitrate cost disputes; unresolved disagreements go to civil court.
Guelph/Eramosa Township	Opted out (2023), with a cost-sharing bylaw.	Follows the standard basic-cost model; confirm the exact percentage with the township.

WHY THIS IS THE BEST EXAMPLE IN THE GUIDE

Kitchener and Waterloo share a border, a transit system, and a regional government, and run opposite fence-cost systems: Waterloo has its own municipal formula, Kitchener still defers to the province's original fence-viewer process. Guelph, one city over, opted out of arbitrating cost at all, closer to Aurora's approach than to either of its Waterloo Region neighbours. Where you live inside this one region changes the answer completely.

09



Elsewhere in Ontario

Beyond the GTA and Hamilton-Waterloo core, coverage gets thinner, some major centres have clear, confirmed answers, others genuinely don't appear to have a municipal cost-sharing bylaw at all.

Municipality	Bylaw & notice period	What the neighbour typically owes
London	Opted out, with its own fence bylaw.	Uses a "just proportion" model triggered by a 4-foot chain-link reference fence; confirm the exact current wording with the city.
Ottawa	Rural areas only: provincial fence-viewer process still applies.	Urban Ottawa does not arbitrate cost; disputes there go to civil court. Two systems in one city, depending on where the property sits.
Kingston	Has not opted out of the Line Fences Act.	The original provincial fence-viewer process still applies.
Greater Sudbury	Has not opted out of the Line Fences Act.	Provincial fence-viewer arbitration, administered through the City Clerk's office.
North Bay	Opted out. By-law 2008-42, amended by By-law 2019-42.	Follows the standard basic-cost model; confirm the exact percentage with the city.
Haldimand County	Opted out, with a cost-sharing bylaw.	Uses the same quote-exchange model described for Newmarket and Brock in section 07.

CONFIRM DIRECTLY WITH THESE MUNICIPALITIES

No confirmed cost-sharing bylaw turned up in this pass for: Barrie, Orillia, and Innisfil; all of Niagara Region (St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Welland, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Fort Erie, Grimsby, Lincoln, Pelham, Port Colborne, Thorold, Wainfleet, West Lincoln); Windsor, Chatham-Kent, Sarnia, Brantford, Woodstock, and St. Thomas; Peterborough, Belleville, Cornwall, Brockville, and Pembroke; and Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, and Timmins. That doesn't mean these municipalities definitely rely on the provincial default, only that a confirmed local bylaw wasn't found here. Section 10 covers how to check your own.

10



If your municipality isn't listed

Not being in this guide doesn't mean there's no answer, it means this specific pass didn't confirm one. Finding your own answer usually takes one search and one phone call.



1. Search your municipality's name plus "fence bylaw" or "division fence." Most municipalities that have opted out publish their bylaw, or at least plain-language guidance, on their own website.



2. Look specifically for the words "opted out" or "Line Fences Act." A bylaw about fence height or pool enclosures is not the same thing as a cost-sharing opt-out, and the two get confused constantly.



3. Call the city clerk's office directly. Use the questions in section 12. This is the fastest way to a definitive answer if a search comes up empty or unclear.

11



Before you pay a fence invoice

This applies no matter which municipality you're in.

- ✓ Confirm whether your municipality has opted out of the Line Fences Act, and if so, find the specific bylaw.
- ✓ Check whether proper written notice was actually given before the fence was built or replaced.
- ✓ Ask whether the formula is based on "basic cost" rather than the actual amount spent, and get a comparison quote if it is.
- ✓ Confirm whether this is new construction or a repair, several bylaws treat the two differently.
- ✓ Get everything in writing before paying anything.

12



Questions to ask your municipality

Copy these into a call or email to your city or township's clerk's office.

- ② Has this municipality opted out of the provincial Line Fences Act?
- ② If so, what is the current bylaw number, and where can I read the full text?
- ② What written notice is required before a fence is built or replaced?
- ② Is cost calculated against "basic cost," actual cost, or the lesser of the two?
- ② How is "basic cost" defined here, materials only, or materials and labour?
- ② Does the formula differ for new construction versus repair or reconstruction?
- ② If we can't agree, what's the actual dispute process, a municipal arbitrator, fence-viewers, or civil court?

13



Glossary

Every term in this guide that can sound intimidating, in everyday language.

Line Fences Act

Ontario's default provincial law for shared boundary fence disputes, using appointed "fence-viewers" to arbitrate, unless a municipality opts out.

Opting out

A municipality passing its own bylaw to replace the provincial Line Fences Act process with local rules.

Fence-viewers

Local officials appointed under the provincial Act to arbitrate a fence dispute where no municipal bylaw applies.

Basic cost

A defined, typically much cheaper reference fence, often a standard 4-foot chain-link fence, used as the cap for a neighbour's cost-sharing obligation in many municipal formulas.

Division fence

The formal term many bylaws use for a fence built along a shared property line.

Quote-exchange model

A process where the initiating owner provides written quotes and the neighbour may submit their own within a set window before a cost split is finalized.

Provincial Offences Act

The legislation some municipalities use to enforce an unpaid fence cost order through the courts.

"Split it 50/50" was never the whole rule.
Now you know your city's actual version of it.

Got a fence dispute, or a question about your own city?

Send me your municipality and I'll help you dig into it. Reach out on Instagram [@jayp.realestate](#).

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*This guide is general education, not legal advice, and reflects bylaws as verified at the time of research. Bylaws change.
Always confirm current rules directly with your municipality before relying on any figure in a real dispute.*