

Most owners start their fence search the same way: with a phone, a search bar, and a stack of star ratings. That is a reasonable place to begin, and it is a dangerous place to stop. A rating is a summary written by a stranger about a project you know nothing about, and the gap between "four and a half stars" and "the right crew for your ravine lot in Vaughan" is where bad decisions get made. The way to close that gap is not more scrolling. It is better questions.

Reading fence contractor reviews is only useful when you interrogate them, and this article is a list of questions that turn reviews from an opinion poll into evidence. They are organized by theme, each with the reason it matters and the shape of a useful answer. Use them while you read, and carry the good ones into the conversation with the contractor, because the reviews that survive questioning are the ones worth acting on.

## **Questions to Ask About the Reviews Themselves**

Before you read a single comment, look at the shape of the review history. Ask how many reviews the company has and over what period they were posted. A company with a hundred reviews spread over eight years is a different entity from one with a hundred reviews posted in the last three months, and the difference matters more than the average. Then ask where the reviews cluster. A burst of five-star reviews in a single week, all roughly the same length, all praising the same thing, is a pattern that deserves a skeptical look, because real review histories are lumpy and uneven.

Ask what the mix looks like. A company with nothing but five-star ratings is either exceptional or curated, and in the fence business, which is full of weather, clay soil, and neighbors, total perfection is rarer than the ratings pages suggest. A few honest three-star reviews, written in a specific voice about a specific problem, usually mean the page is real. That is worth more than a perfect score.

## **Questions About What the Reviews Actually Describe**

Now read the words, and ask what each review actually tells you. Does it describe a fence, or does it describe a feeling? "Great job, highly recommend" is a feeling. "They replaced forty feet of cedar on our north line, set the posts in concrete, and the gate still swings true after two winters" is information. Ask whether the reviews mention materials, crew behavior, punctuality, cleanup, or how changes mid-job were handled, because those are the things that predict your experience. Reviews that name specific details are written by people who were paying attention, and they are the reviews to trust.

Ask what the reviews do not say. Fence projects involve neighbors, property lines, and surprises in the ground, and a review that describes a flawless project may simply be a review from an owner who never looked. The absence of any mention of how problems were handled is not proof that no problems occurred. It is proof that the reviewer did not mention them, which is a different thing.

## **Questions About the Complaints**

Negative reviews are where the information lives, so ask what they have in common. One complaint about a slow final payment dispute is a data point. Three complaints about crews not showing up on the agreed day is a pattern, and a pattern is a preview of your project. Ask whether the complaints cluster around one issue, like scheduling, communication, or cleanup, and ask how recent they are. A company that fixed its scheduling problem three years ago is not the same company that has one now.

Ask whether the negative reviews describe things you can verify. A complaint that a fence leaned after a hard winter is verifiable if the reviewer names a neighborhood. A complaint that is vague about everything except the writer's anger is harder to weigh. And ask yourself the uncomfortable question: is this complaint about a problem that would bother you? A reviewer who is furious about a two-week delay in peak season may be telling you something useful about the company, or something useful about themselves.

## Questions About How the Company Responds

The way a contractor answers criticism tells you more than the criticism itself. Ask whether the company responds to negative reviews at all, and ask what the responses sound like. A reply that acknowledges the problem, offers a fix, and stays professional is the reply of a business that expects to be in the same market next year. A reply that argues with the reviewer, blames the weather, or demands the review be taken down is a reply that tells you how a disagreement with you would go.

Ask whether the company responds to positive reviews too. It sounds trivial, but a business that thanks people for good reviews and engages with bad ones is running a real customer relationship, not a marketing page. That habit transfers directly to how they will treat you after the deposit is paid and the crew has left.



## Questions About Which Platform to Trust

Ask where the reviews live, because platforms are not created equal. In the GTA, owners tend to find fence contractors on Google, Homestars, Houzz, and Facebook, and each one has a different verification process and a different audience. Ask whether the reviews you are reading come from people who actually hired the company, which some platforms confirm and others do not. Ask whether the platform lets anyone post, including competitors and people who never used the service. And ask whether the company's presence on one platform looks curated, with a suspiciously clean history, while another shows a more honest mix. The contrast between platforms is often where the real picture emerges.

Ask how the reviews compare with what the company itself says. A contractor whose website promises twenty years of experience while the review history spans three seasons is a contractor whose marketing is doing the talking. Read the reviews as a check on the marketing, not as a supplement to it.

## Questions to Ask the Contractor After Reading

The reviews are research, and research belongs in the conversation. Ask the contractor about the recurring theme you noticed. If several reviews mention slow responses, ask how they handle communication during a job, and listen to whether the answer is specific. If the reviews are all recent, ask how long the company has been operating under this name and what changed. You are not trying to corner anyone. You are checking whether the review history matches the story they tell about themselves.

Ask for the names behind the reviews. A contractor who can point to a specific review [automatic gate installation services](#) and tell you what happened on that job, without hesitation, is a contractor who knows their own work. A contractor who has never read their own reviews is a contractor who is not paying attention to the business, and that is a fact worth having before you sign.

## Questions to Ask References and Neighbors

Reviews point you to people, and people are better evidence than stars. Ask whether any reviewers are in your area, and ask the contractor for a recent job nearby regardless of what the reviews say. When you talk to a reference, ask the questions the reviews cannot answer: did the crew show up when promised, was the site left clean, did the final bill match the quote, and what happened when something went wrong? Then ask whether you can walk past the finished fence, because a fence that has stood through a GTA winter without leaning is the only [pool enclosure contractor](#) review that cannot be faked.

Ask your neighbors too, especially on streets where several fences went up in the same season. The owner two doors down who had a fence installed by a crew that was in the neighborhood for a week has a review that will never be posted online, and it is the most relevant one you will find, because it is about your soil, your weather, and your street.

## Questions to Ask Yourself

Finally, ask yourself what you are doing with the information. Are you weighting recent reviews over old ones, or just averaging the stars? Are you treating one bad review as disqualifying when the complaint is about something that does not apply to your project? Are you mistaking a charming salesman for a proven crew because the charming one has better reviews? And are you using the reviews to narrow the field, or to confirm a decision you already made? The questions in this article do not answer themselves. They only work if you let them change your mind.

One more self-question deserves a spot in the list: are you comparing the reviews, or just reading them? A company with a 4.9 average and thirty reviews is not necessarily better than a company with a 4.6 and two hundred, and the only way to know is to read both histories side by side. Ask what the 4.9 company's reviewers actually say about handling problems, and ask what the 4.6 company's critics keep repeating. Then ask which set of patterns matches the project you are planning, because a company that excels at straight runs of chain link on flat commercial lots may be the wrong fit for a sloped residential backyard with a shared fence on two sides. Reviews are comparative evidence. They do their best work when two histories are sitting on the table together.

Reading fence contractor reviews with the right questions turns a page of opinions into a shortlist you can defend. The star rating tells you the company exists and people have hired it. The questions tell you whether the people who hired it would do it again, and why, and that is the information that survives contact with your own property. Ask them before you call, and ask them again after the quotes arrive, because a review that looked good in your living room should still look good next to a signed contract.