HAGE FENCE

PLANNING PLAYBOOK

Plan the fence before you price it.

Measuring, materials, gates and permits for Pinellas County yards — written by the crew that builds them.

Hage Fence · 6610 14th Street North, St. Petersburg, FL 33702
727-300-6718 · hagefence@gmail.com · hagefence.com

Before you measure anything

Most fence projects start with a material. That is the last decision, not the first.

A fence is a boundary with a job to do. Before a single foot is measured, answer four questions in writing.

THE FOUR QUESTIONS

1. **What has to be blocked?** Sightlines, a dog, a pool, traffic noise, a neighbour's window.
2. **What has to stay visible?** A garden, the water, a child playing, the front of the house.
3. **Who maintains it in five years?** If the answer is nobody, choose a material that does not ask.
4. **What has to pass through it?** People, bins, a boat trailer, a ride-on mower, a delivery van.

Those four answers decide the material, the height and the gate count. Everything else is detail.

This playbook is a planning tool, not a quote and not legal advice. Site conditions, local rules and property records decide the final scope.

How to measure a run properly

You do not need a survey to plan a fence, but you do need more than a rough guess.

Measure in straight runs, not in one loop

Walk the property line and write down each straight section separately, with its length. Corners are where fences go wrong, so number them.

Count gates separately

A gate is priced as a small structure, not as a section of fence. Note the width of every opening and what has to pass through it.

Note the slope

A run that drops two feet across its length will either be stepped or racked, and those look different. Photograph the grade at each corner.

Find the obstacles

Irrigation lines, septic fields, pool equipment, tree roots, downspouts, gas meters, easements. Each one either moves the fence or moves the obstacle.

Check the property line

A fence on the wrong side of a line is an expensive conversation. If there is no recent survey, get one before installation, not after.

Choosing material for the exposure

Pinellas County is a coastal subtropical climate: salt air, high humidity, intense UV and a storm season. Materials behave differently here than they do inland.

Material	Best at	Weak at	Maintenance
Vinyl	Privacy, low upkeep, clean look	Impact, very dark colours in full sun	Rinse and inspect
Wood	Natural finish, custom heights	Rot at posts, finish cycles	Stain and seal every few years
Aluminum	Coastal durability, open look, pools	Privacy	Rinse and inspect
Chain link	Cost, security, utility runs	Appearance, privacy	Minimal
Composite	Longevity, appearance	Upfront cost	Minimal

The rule of thumb: privacy pushes you to vinyl, wood or composite. An open boundary pushes you to aluminum. A budget or security run pushes you to chain link.

If different parts of the yard want different things, that is normal. Plan the whole perimeter at once so the transitions look deliberate.

Gates: the detail that decides the project

A gate is used more than any other part of a fence, and it is the first thing to fail when it is undersized.

Width

Measure what actually passes through, then add clearance. A ride-on mower needs more than a wheelbarrow.

Swing

The gate should swing toward the space that has room and land on level ground.

Posts

A gate post carries the leaf, the hinge and the impact of every opening. It is not the same post as a panel post.

Hardware

Hinges, latches and stops selected for coastal conditions, not whatever is in the box.

Automation

If the gate may ever be automated, say so before installation. Power, conduit and a suitable post are cheaper now than later.

For pool barriers, the gate must self-close and self-latch, with hardware out of a small child's reach. That is a hardware decision, not a fencing one.

Permits, property lines and rules

Three separate questions get confused constantly. Keep them apart.

1. Does the work need a building permit?

Florida's rules changed with HB 803, which took effect on 1 July 2026 and exempts certain work on single-family residential property valued at $7,500 or less — but the exemption excludes structural work and does not apply in

flood hazard areas. A full perimeter fence is rarely under that threshold, and a fence post is a structural element. Check with the local building department for the address before assuming.

2. Is the property in a flood zone?

Pinellas County has extensive flood hazard areas, and the exemption above does not apply inside them. This is the detail most homeowners miss.

3. Are there private rules?

HOA covenants, deed restrictions, easements and utility rights-of-way can all dictate height, material and position. Read them before ordering material.

None of this is legal advice. It is the list of questions to ask before you spend money.

Questions to ask any fence contractor

Print this page and take it to every estimate.

- [ ] How deep will the posts be set, and in what?
- [ ] What concrete specification are you using, and does it finish above grade?
- [ ] Is removal and haul-off included in this number?
- [ ] How many gates are included, and how wide are they?
- [ ] What hardware is supplied, and is it rated for coastal air?
- [ ] Are posts sized for the gate, or matched to the panels?
- [ ] Who pulls the permit, and who pays for it?
- [ ] What happens if the grade changes mid-run?
- [ ] What is the payment schedule, and what is due at completion?
- [ ] Who do I call if a gate drops in eight months?

A contractor who answers these without hesitating is worth more than a quote that is ten percent lower.

NOTES

The one-page plan

Fill this in before you request an estimate. It is the difference between a quote and a guess.

PROPERTY TYPE

MAIN GOAL

STRAIGHT RUNS — FEET

HEIGHT WANTED

GATES AND WIDTHS

SLOPE — FLAT, GENTLE OR STEEP

OBSTACLES — IRRIGATION, ROOTS, EASEMENT, OTHER

EXISTING FENCE REMOVAL — YES OR NO

MATERIAL PREFERENCE

TIMELINE

BRING IT TO THE WALK

Bring this page and a few photos of the property line. The estimate gets faster and more accurate, and nothing gets missed at the corner where the grade drops.

What happens next

Send the plan to Hage Fence and we will review it, ask the questions that matter for your property, and set up an on-site consultation if you want one. Estimates are free and there is no obligation.

Storm Strong fences.

Built for Florida storms, heat, humidity and coastal salt air.

727-300-6718 · hagefence@gmail.com
6610 14th Street North, St. Petersburg, FL 33702
hagefence.com