

10 Common Costs to Owning a Home



1. Property tax

Many of the services you'll enjoy in your new neighbourhood, from parks and recreation facilities to road maintenance and schools, are funded in part by municipal property taxes. Annual taxes can top several thousand dollars in urban centres, so some home-owners opt to pay in instalments - your lender may provide an option to combine these with your mortgage payments.



2. Energy costs

If you're used to keeping the lights on and the thermostat up because utilities are included in your rent, you'll now have to pay for these costs. Budget to cover monthly gas, electric, or oil bills, which fluctuate with the seasons. Your real estate agent can ask a home's seller to confirm past costs.



3. Home maintenance

Plan to cover all the occasional costs to keep your house in working order, such as changing furnace filters, carpet cleaning, clearing your eaves troughs, and touching up interior or exterior paint. You'll find it easy to spend \$30 or more a month on such home maintenance items and services.



4. Repairs

These are larger, less frequent expenses like replacing the roof, furnace, air-conditioning units, or appliances. Housing experts recommend setting aside 1% to 3% of the value of your house each year - a minimum \$1,000 for every \$100,000.



5. Home insurance

Protect your home, its contents, and your property against damage or liability. Prices can

vary, depending on your home and neighbourhood, but plan for costs that typically start at a minimum of \$500 per year. Keep in mind that a lower-cost policy may not offer the comprehensive coverage you may want. You can keep costs down by choosing a higher deductible.



6. Fuel or transit costs

If you'll be commuting a longer distance to work, consider whether you will face higher fuel or public transit costs or whether you'll have to pay for parking.



7. Monitored security

If you opt for home protection, monitoring can cost anywhere from \$20 to \$40 or more per month, depending on the plan.



8. Phone, cable, and internet services

The costs of being "connected" can easily add up to a couple of hundred dollars a month. Moving into a new home might be a good time to consider whether you need both a land line and a wireless line, for instance, or if you can bundle services for a discount.



9. Property upkeep

Consider outdoor areas that may need tending to, such as wooden decks, fences, gardens, and lawns. Even when you do the work yourself, budget at least a few hundred dollars seasonally for items like wood sealant, landscaping supplies, and plants.



10. Municipal services

Some municipalities charge fees for services like water or garbage removal. For example, home-owners in some larger urban centres pay \$150 to \$235 a year for curbside collection of garbage, recycling, and compost.