

THE RETAIL FIXTURE MATERIAL SELECTION QUICK CHECK GUIDE

Brought to you by Canada's Best Store Fixtures

WOOD & MILLWORK						
MATERIAL / CATEGORY	RELATIVE COST TIER	DURABILITY	AESTHETIC / FINISH QUALITY	PROS	CONS	COMMON USE CASES / NOTES
Particle Board / Chipboard	\$ (Lowest)	Low	Low	Cheapest substrate, easy to machine	Swells with moisture, weak for load-bearing	Hidden structures, temporary displays, basic shelving
Melamine (Particle Core)	\$	Low-Medium	Medium	Pre-finished, clean look, economical	Chips easily, limited edge options	Grocery and C-store fixtures, economical cabinetry
Standard Plywood	\$ \$	Medium	Low-Medium	Stronger than particle board, takes fasteners well	Rough edge grain, visible voids	Utility builds, industrial-style fixtures
Melamine (MDF Core)	\$ \$	Medium	Medium-High	Smoother, denser, allows cleaner edges	Heavier and costlier than particle core	Upscale retail fixtures, mid-range cabinetry
High-Pressure Laminate (HPL)	\$ \$	Medium-High	Medium-High	Wide variety of finishes, very durable	Visible seams, edges need finishing	Countertops, shelving, wall panels
Veneered Panels (Birch, Maple, Oak, etc.)	\$ \$ \$	Medium-High	High	Premium wood look, customizable grains (rift, quarter, flat)	More costly, labour-intensive	Wall panels, feature fixtures, cabinetry
Baltic Birch Plywood	\$ \$ \$	High	Medium-High	Beautiful layered edge, strong & stable	More expensive than standard ply	Exposed-edge furniture, retail displays
Reclaimed Wood	\$ \$ \$ - \$ \$ \$ \$	Medium-High	High	Sustainable, textured, unique	Quality varies, limited supply	Accent walls, rustic or boutique environments
Solid Pine	\$ \$ \$	Medium	Medium	Affordable solid wood option	Softer, dents easily	Grocery, rustic, or budget solid-wood builds
Solid Maple / Oak / Walnut / Teak / Live Edge	\$ \$ \$ \$	High	Very High	Premium look, durable, timeless	Heavy, expensive, susceptible to warping	Feature walls, bar tops, furniture-grade fixtures
Paint Finishes (on MDF or Veneer)	\$ \$ \$ - \$ \$ \$ \$	Medium	Medium-High	Infinite colours and sheens, customizable	Labour and curing costs, can chip	Millwork, panels, accent fixtures

GLASS, PLASTICS & ACRYLIC						
MATERIAL / CATEGORY	RELATIVE COST TIER	DURABILITY	AESTHETIC / FINISH QUALITY	PROS	CONS	COMMON USE CASES / NOTES
Acrylic (Plexiglass)	\$ \$ \$	Medium	High	Light, formable, translucent / coloured options	Scratches easily, chemical sensitive	Signage, dividers, displays
Acrylic Mirror	\$ \$ \$	Medium	High	Lightweight mirror alternative	Can warp or scratch	Wall panels, decorative applications
Tempered Glass	\$ \$ \$ \$	High	High	Durable, elegant, safety-rated	Heavy, costly to cut and replace	Shelving, partitions, mirrors, doors
Low-Iron / Specialty Glass	\$ \$ \$ \$ \$	High	Very High	Crystal-clear, no green tint	Premium cost	Feature glazing, high-end counters, luxury retail

METAL						
MATERIAL / CATEGORY	RELATIVE COST TIER	DURABILITY	AESTHETIC / FINISH QUALITY	PROS	CONS	COMMON USE CASES / NOTES
Aluminum (Painted or Anodized)	\$ \$ \$	Medium	Medium-High	Lightweight, corrosion-resistant	Soft, dents easily	Trim, framing, light fixtures
Mild Steel (Hot Rolled / HRPO / Cold Rolled)	\$ \$ \$	High	Medium	Strong, affordable, weldable	Can rust, heavy	Structural frames, industrial aesthetic, trims
Stainless Steel (Mill / Satin / Mirror)	\$ \$ \$ \$	Very High	Medium-Very High	Corrosion-resistant, premium look	Costly, fingerprints on mirror finish	Countertops, toe kicks, walls, signage
Brass / Bronze / Copper	\$ \$ \$ \$ \$	Medium-High	Very High	Rich, warm tone, patinas beautifully	Expensive, surface oxidation	Trim inlays, bar fronts, high-end decorative details

STONE						
MATERIAL / CATEGORY	RELATIVE COST TIER	DURABILITY	AESTHETIC / FINISH QUALITY	PROS	CONS	COMMON USE CASES / NOTES
Engineered / Manufactured Stone	\$ \$ \$ \$	High	High	Consistent look, lighter weight	Less natural variation	Retail counters, cost-controlled luxury looks
Natural Stone (Marble / Granite)	\$ \$ \$ \$ \$	Very High	Very High	Luxurious, durable, timeless	Heavy, costly, porous	Countertops, focal features

Note: Relative pricing tiers reflect general fabrication and finish costs, not raw commodity pricing. Final cost depends on project scale, sourcing, finish type, and installation complexity.