

Shopify Maintenance Retainer Scope Sheet

Price it by the hour, size it by change rate, sign it with these terms. By Kaspian Fuad, Shopify developer.

1. Convert every quote to \$/hour

monthly fee / hours included

If hours are not stated, you cannot compare the plan.

Offshore package: \$350 / 10h

About \$35 an hour. Unused hours lapse.

Direct senior: \$2,700-3,600 / 60-80h

About \$45 an hour, 25% rollover.

US agency: \$5,100 / 30h

About \$170 an hour, team overhead included.

2. Size hours by change rate

Stable theme, <10 apps: 2-5h

No retainer. Pay hourly + a \$19/mo backup app.

Weekly promos, 15-30 apps: 10-20h

Small retainer or weekly blocks.

Plus, integrations, CR0: 30-80h

Monthly retainer, locked rate, rollover.

3. What Shopify already covers

Hosting, SSL, uptime, checkout

Included in every plan. Do not pay to monitor it.

PCI DSS Level 1

Extends by default to all Shopify stores.

Theme auto-updates

Bug and security fixes only. Not uploaded themes.

4. What you actually pay for

Theme updates on a duplicate

Redo code edits that could not carry over.

App conflicts + speed drift

Measure blocking time after every install.

Platform deadlines

Scripts, checkout, accounts, disclosures.

Tracking + data backups

Pixels break silently. Back up products + customers.

5. 2026 deadlines to ask about

Jun 17 Customer accounts redesign

Account and order page customizations.

Jun 22 Subscription disclosure

Default wording shown at checkout.

Jun 30 Shopify Scripts off

Line item, shipping, payment Scripts on Plus.

Aug 26 Additional scripts off

Thank-you page pixels on non-Plus plans.

6. Contract terms to demand

Duplicate-theme rule

No change ships on the live theme first.

Response time in hours

e.g. checkout-down answered in 4 business hours.

Rollover terms

Do unused hours lapse or carry forward?

Collaborator access

Request code you control. Never the owner password.

7. More terms to demand

Monthly written report

Shipped, hours used, next, one number that moved.

Notice period

30 days is fair. Avoid 12-month lock-ins.

Code ownership + exclusions

Theme code is yours. Ads, copy, design stated.

8. Red flags

"Unlimited small tasks"

Someone else decides what small means.

Uptime/security as the lead item

Shopify already provides both.

Edits on the live theme

No rollback when it breaks on a Friday.

No mention of platform deadlines

They watch tickets, not the platform.

9. Monthly maintenance checklist

Theme update available?

Apply on a duplicate, test, then publish.

Apps added or removed

Re-test PDP and cart speed after each.

GA4 + ad pixel purchase events

Compare to Shopify orders for the month.

Shopify changelog

Any dated change touching your code?

Backup app last run

Confirm products, customers, themes backed up.

10. 5-minute retainer check

Invoice / hours in report

No hours in the report = no way to judge.

Theme update sitting for months

Nobody is maintaining it.

"What did you do for Aug 26?"

The answer shows if they watch the platform.