TRADECRAFT

# Cedar privacy fence

6' privacy fence, straight 24' run

DRAFT V0.3, PENDING INSTALLER REVIEW

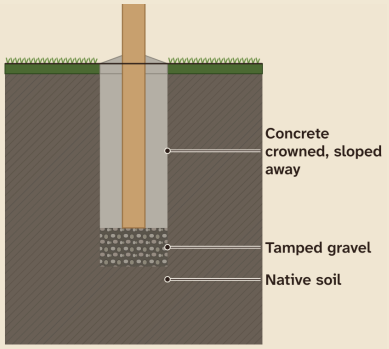
THE STEPS ON VIDEO

## 3 RULES

### 1 Posts treated for ground contact; cedar only on rails and pickets

### 2 Stainless or hot-dip galvanized fasteners

### 3 The string rules, not your eye






### FINISHED LOOK

24'

| | |
|---|---|
| Cedar privacy fence: 4x4 posts 8 ft o.c., 3 × 2x4 rails, 1x6 dog-ear pickets, 6 ft<br>4 whole, 9 whole, 53 whole | 66 pieces |
| Ready-mix concrete, 3000 psi, 4" slab (6" driveway) | 4 pieces |

Colour not chosen yet

### KEY NUMBERS

| | |
|---|---|
| 24" | of post in the ground |
| 30" | hole depth |
| 2" | clear under the pickets |
| 6' | from the ground to the top |
| 8' | max between posts, center to center |

A fence fails at the posts. A shallow or out-of-plumb post leans, and a picket in the soil rots. Resetting them means days unpaid and a lost referral.

### STOP AND CHECK

**If any of these happens, don't keep going.**

- No property markers or survey: don't lay out
- Frost depth on your sheet > 30": dig below it
- Concrete not set, per the bag: no rails or pickets
- Picket top > 6' from grade or the local limit: trim it

## STEPS

### 1 The holes

- 6" of ¾" clean gravel, tamped
- 24" of post in the ground
- Hole 3 times the post width (Quikrete)

**Check:** Hole at 30", measured with a tape

### 2 End posts

- Plumb on two faces
- Concrete crowned above ground, sloped away
- Brace two sides until it sets

**Check:** Level on two faces, before and after

### 3 Line posts, the ones between

- One string high, one low
- String on the post face, not center
- 8' max, center to center

**Check:** Before it sets: every post touches both strings

### 4 Rails

- Top: 6" below the top edge
- Bottom: 6" above the ground
- Middle: centered, at 36"

**Check:** Every rail crown up, bow facing up

### 5 Pickets

- 2" clear under the picket
- Trimmed to 5' 10"
- Butt tight, edge to edge, no spacer

**Check:** First picket plumb; check every few pickets

### 6 Straight top

- String end to end, at 6'
- Preservative on every post cut end
- Stain only after the cedar dries

**Check:** Top even with the string; take after photos

## THE 3 COSTLIEST MISTAKES

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ✕ Smooth or plain steel nails: streak and back out | ✕ On a slope, pickets touch the soil | ✕ Concrete splatter drying on the cedar |
| ✓ Ringed nails or exterior screws, stainless or hot-dip galvanized | ✓ Step the bays or follow the grade, 2" clear | ✓ Rinse it off right away |

**This job's local rule:** Maximum height, permits, distance from the property line, which side faces the neighbor and frost depth change in every place.

Hard-surface limit: _____ Water goes to: _____ Permit? yes / no

## STAY SAFE

- Call 811 before you dig, it's free.
- Best practice: power auger with two people, braced, ready to let go of the throttle.
- Wet concrete burns: gloves and glasses. Dry mix dust: dust mask, pour low, wet it down.
- Circular saw: glasses, hearing protection, outdoor-rated cord on a GFCI outlet.

**Sources:** Job spec (cedar fence). Quikrete Fast-Setting post directions, Western Red Cedar Lumber Association fence and fastener guidance, American Softwood Lumber Standard sizes and AWPA for treated posts and cut ends: to verify before script lock. Conflict: Quikrete calls for a wider hole than the trade rule; Quikrete's value stands. The wait before rails is the one printed on the bag.

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