

RAIN CITY FENCE GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGY

Posts

The first part of a fence to know is the fence post. Fence posts are the thick, upright posts which hold the rest of the fence together. Though we tend to ignore them, fence posts are the structural base of the entire fence – you can think of them like the fence’s foundation. Because of their importance, it’s vital you or your contractor uses quality fence posts and installs them properly.

Fences can use several different types of posts, including:

- **Framework:** The structure that supports fencing and gates. The framework includes posts, braces, top rails, and bottom rails.
- **Line posts:** Standard fence posts, spaced regularly along the fence line. Line posts support fence panels or rails on each side.
- **Corner posts:** A post at the corner of where two sections of fencing fence panels or rails meet, usually at a 90-degree angle.
- **End posts:** A post that marks the end of a fence line, such as where the fence supports a gate or runs up against a house.
- **Terminal posts:** A load-bearing post for the fence line. Terminal posts can be corner, end or gate posts.
- **Gate posts:** A post to which a gate is attached with either hinges or latches.
- **Trim:** Trim is used to hide the fasteners that hold the pickets to the rails. This consists of small 1x1” strips of wood that help improve the overall appearance of the fence.

Rails, Pickets and Panels

It’s common to think of panels or pickets as the “main” part of a fence. These pieces form the “wall” of the fence which keeps out intruders, blocks sight lines and provides shade and shelter for your property. Though they are similar, panels, pickets and rails are all distinct pieces of a fence and it’s important to understand them all.

- **Rails:** Rails are the horizontal part of a fence that hold the pickets or panels in place. Many vinyl fences have two rails, one at the top and one at the bottom.

However, it's not uncommon to see many fences with three rails: top, bottom, and center. The distance between the rails is known as the **rail spacing**.

- **Pickets:** Pickets are the vertical boards held up by the rails. They form the wall of the fence. Pickets can be arranged on the rails in many ways to allow for different levels of visibility through the fence. There are also different sizes of pickets available for vinyl fences which allow you to create different looks for your fence. Pickets can also be joined together (tongue-and-groove pickets) for complete privacy or spaced apart to allow for some visibility through the fence.
- **Panels:** Some big-box stores offer pre-assembled vinyl fence panels, but they are not as strong or well-built as custom fences. For a custom fence, the panel is simply the arrangement of pickets and rails between each post.
- **Section:** The area of fencing between two posts.
- **Height** – Height is the distance from the ground to the top of the fence. Care should be taken to keep the height uniform between posts. Height can vary from just a few feet to much higher than anyone could see over. The purpose and the style you like will determine the height.
- **Gauge** – Gauge is the thickness of the wires used in a hog wire fence.

Accessories and Options

Along with the essential pieces of a fence, you can also choose from a wide variety of options and accessories to truly make your fence your own. Here are a few of the pieces you can choose from:

- **Post Caps:** Post caps are decorative accents for your fence that are placed on top of the fence posts. Post caps can be made in many different styles, and can even have solar or low-voltage lights built in for a decorative effect or for pathway lighting. We offer a variety of post cap styles so you can achieve the look and design you want.
- **Gates and Gate Hardware:** No fence is complete without a gate. There are many different types and styles of gates to choose from, including solid gates,

gates with decorative inserts (which can also be used for visibility through the gate itself), and even motorized driveway gates to fully enclose your property. Gates are also available with standard latches or latches that can be keyed to your house key.

Fence types

Good neighbor fence - Fence that alternates the “bad” rail side and “good” picket side of the fence every 7 feet. Good-neighbor fences provide the same amount of rail and picket side for each neighbor’s fence, negating disagreements about who gets which side of the fence.

Private: There is no visibility through the panels to offer complete privacy.

Semi-private: A semi-private fence provides a balance of airflow and privacy. Slight spacing between the pickets allows light and air to enter, while still offering just the right amount of privacy.

Grade change

These are specific methods used to fence hilly or contoured areas. Different slope types, or grade changes, are used to address the change in elevation over the length of a fence.

- **Stepping** – This style of fence gradually steps down the slope, resembling stair steps. Stepping is for steep slopes where a fence cannot be “racked” enough to follow the grade and must be stepped. Stepping a fence results in gaps underneath the fence that can be covered or left open if the space is not an issue.
- **Grade/Racking** – This style of fence follows the contour of the slope on which the fence is installed. The tops of the fence will be uneven and follow the same contour as the terrain. Racking can be accomplished with Wood, Vinyl, and Rackable Iron fence types.
- **Level** – This style of fence keeps the fence level with the highest point of the terrain. They are generally used in bowl shaped areas of terrain where there is a dip between two high points. Filling in the gaps underneath the fence with underpinning is recommended if you have dogs and small children. Any fence type can be level.

