

How We Work: Fences and Gates

This note goes with your quote. Nothing in it needs answering. It explains how we build fences and gates, so you can see what you are paying for and what to expect on the day.

Nothing wooden goes in the ground

A timber fence almost always fails in the same place first, at ground level, where the post is wet on one side and dry on the other. Once the post goes, the fence goes with it, however good the panels are.

So we do not put timber in the ground. The posts that go in are concrete, set on a compacted base and concreted in. The timber then bolts to the face of them. The part that carries the fence cannot rot, and the part that can rot never touches the soil.

It is the same on a gate. The hanging post takes all the movement every time the gate opens, so it is set properly and given time to cure before the gate goes on it.

Built to your opening, not cut down to fit

Ready-made panels come in fixed widths, and a run of fence rarely divides neatly into them. The usual answer is to cut a panel down, which means cutting through its frame and leaving the last section weaker than the rest.

We build each section to the opening in front of us instead. Rails are cut to the gap, slats are fixed to those rails, and every section carries its own full frame. A gate is made the same way, to the measured opening, with the diagonal brace running the right way so it cannot drop.

Treatment goes on before the fence does

A fence is most vulnerable where you cannot see it: the back of a slat, the end grain at the top and bottom, the face where two boards overlap. Once it is assembled, none of that can be reached.

We treat the slats flat, before anything is built, so all four faces and both ends are covered. Cut ends are treated again as they are cut. It takes longer and it is the reason the timber lasts.

Machined timber needs time

Planed and machined timber comes from the mill already pressure treated, but the machining exposes fresh timber that has to be re-treated. That coating needs 14 to 21 days to take properly before the timber is worked.

If your job uses machined timber we order it early and build that wait into the dates we offer you. It is not a delay at our end, it is the timber doing what it needs to do, and rushing it is the one shortcut that shows up two winters later.

What the day looks like

We arrive inside the window we gave you and walk the job with you before anything comes out of the van, so you know where we will be working, where the old materials will stack, and where we will mix.

Ground beside the work is sheeted before we start. Your side of any shared boundary is protected, and so is the neighbour's where we are working against it. Gates stay closed while we are on site if there are pets or children about.

At the end of every day tools go away, anything open is made safe, and the area is swept. If the job runs over more than one day we tell you where it stands before we leave.

What we ask of you

- Clear the line of the fence or the swing of the gate where you can, and tell us about anything you would rather move yourself
- Let us know where the water supply is, and keep the side access clear on the day
- Tell us if you know of anything buried near the line, a cable, a pipe or a soakaway
- Keep pets and children away from open post holes while we are there

After we have finished

Leave new concrete alone for a few days before leaning anything on the fence or hanging anything from it. A new gate will settle slightly in its first weeks and we will come back and adjust it if it needs it.

Treated timber weathers. It will lift in colour over the first year and will want re-coating every two to three years to keep its look. If you would rather it silvered naturally that is fine too, it does not affect how long it lasts.

If anything moves, sticks or does not sit right, tell us and we will come and look at it.

*We keep our working hours manageable so we can give every customer our full attention and maintain high standards.
We take pride in doing things properly and calmly. From our family to yours, thank you for choosing Mendwell.*

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