

## Setting Vinyl and Ornamental Posts

Objective: By mastering this lesson, you will be able to set vinyl and ornamental fence posts so that the fence is both pleasing to the eye and functional for the customer.

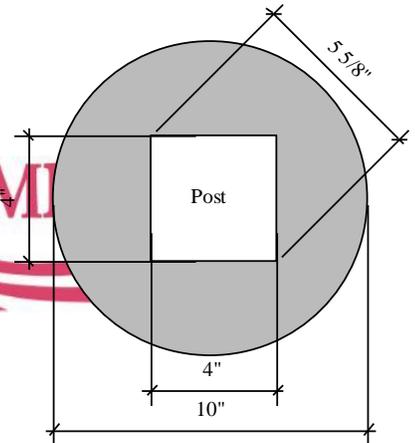
Equipment: String line, level, post hole digger, stakes, hammer, sludge hammer, marking paint, marker or crayon, 20'+ tape measure, 200'+ tape measure, shovel, spade, ladder, wheel barrow, little beaver (auger, torque bar, gas & oil), and skidsteer (auger, digger head, auger & bucket). Unique to ornamental and vinyl fencing is the use of a jig.

### Key Questions:

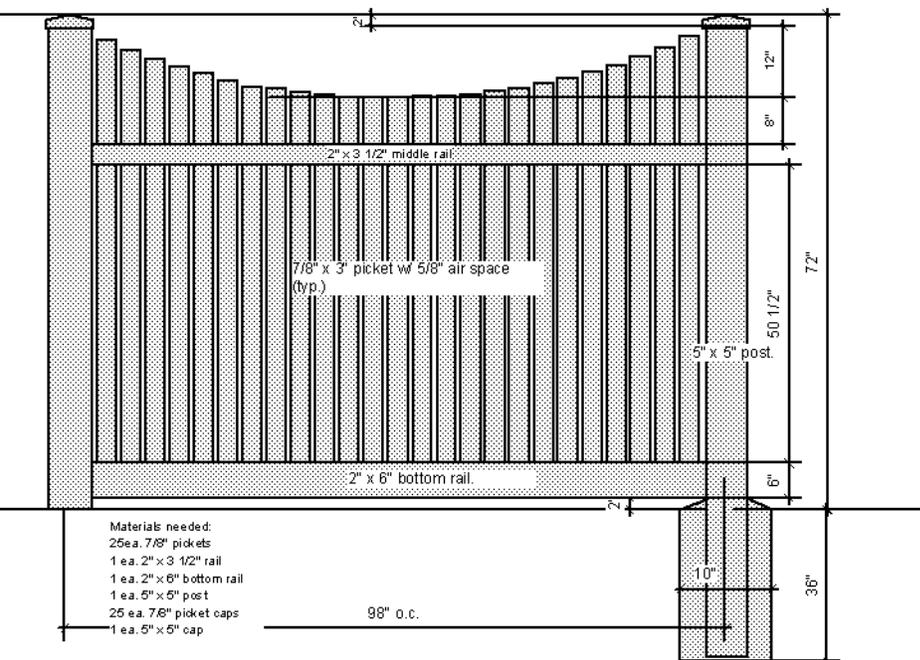
1. What is unique to setting vinyl posts?
2. What is unique to setting ornamental posts?
3. What information do I need to get after setting vinyl and ornamental posts?

After thoroughly covering the installation of setting chain link post; this section will only focus on the unique installation techniques required to set wood, ornamental and vinyl posts. Many of the common installation steps required to set chain link fencing apply to all varieties of fence.

*What is unique to setting vinyl posts?* Every vinyl fence installation has a dimensioned fabrication drawing that specifically details the materials, heights, widths, etc. All the materials are specifically designed, fabricated and cut according to the drawings. Consequently, to vary from this drawing will result in a considerable amount of material scrap and specialty fabrication as each nonstandard panel is fabricated. That is why it is absolutely imperative that you set your posts according to the inside to inside dimensions of the drawing.



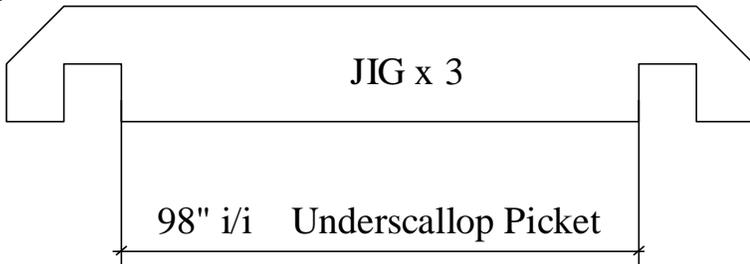
6' Underscallop 7/8" picket w/ 5/8" air space



Before beginning your vinyl fence posts installation, you should obtain the fence fabrication drawings from your material provider. This drawing will not only indicate post spacing but also post height above grade.

With drawing in-hand, you should then obtain three posts setting jigs. These jigs are generally made from 2' x 4"s. At each end of the 2" x 4" is a slit wider than the wall thickness of the vinyl post. The dimension between the two slits should be equal to the inside

to inside post dimension indicated on the fabrication drawing. See detail.



While on the project site, mark the post according to the drawing. Mark your post hole locations with a good tape measure. Pull the tape taut between each hole location. Take your time in being accurate. This layout will have to be exact to  $\pm \frac{1}{4}$ ". So, use small nails or pins to mark each post location. Do not use

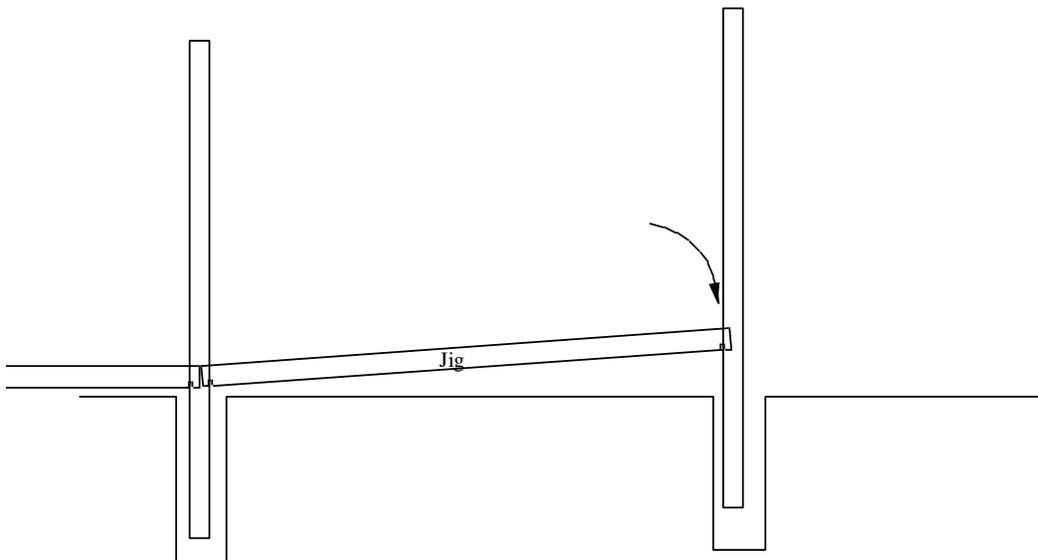
paint because a paint mark is broad enough that it is difficult to discern where the centerline mark is located. This is the most common mistake in laying out vinyl fence posts.

Unless you are trying to obtain evenly spaced sections, layout full panels along each stretch. Undoubtedly, the last panel will be a partial panel. If too unsightly, go back one full panel and split the difference. For example, if the last panel is a two foot panel and the typical full panel is eight foot. Go back one full panel and compromise with two five foot panels.



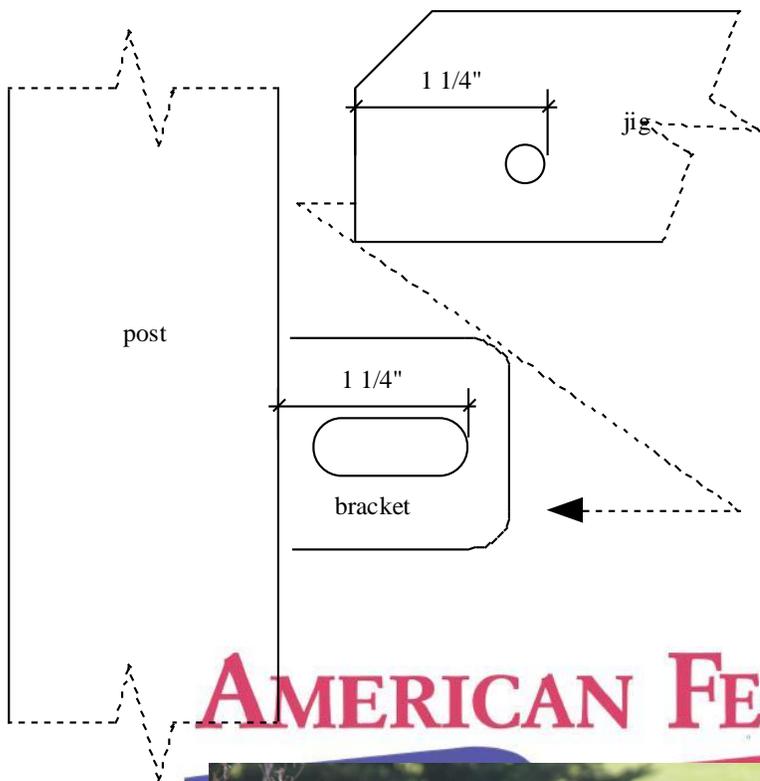
After digging your holes, slide the first post into the concrete footing. Slide the second post half way into the concrete footing. Before getting the second post all the way down, place the jig between the two post by sliding the jig into the bottom hole of each post where the bottom rail is to be located.

Slide the end of the jig into the hole and lock into place so that notch in the jig saddles the bottom edge of the rail route. Now, slide the second post all the way into the footing. Repeat this procedure with the second and third post and third and fourth post, using three jigs. This jiggling of posts assures absolute accuracy between posts. The reason we use three jigs is so that we do not continue to pull each adjacent post out-of-plumb as we level up the last post set. By tying all three posts together, it is very difficult to pull any one post out-of-plumb.



*What is unique to setting ornamental posts?* Setting ornamental posts is identical to setting vinyl post but that the jig more closely represents an ornamental rail. Do not use an ornamental rail in lieu of the jig because the jig is a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " longer and designed to prevent you from pulling the post

apart, using the full slot in the rail.



*What information do I need to get after setting ornamental and vinyl posts? After setting your posts, create an as-built that illustrates the following:*

1. Every post set. Show each post as a square.
2. Every full panel bay. Illustrate with "FP"
3. Any partial panels, provide inside to inside dimensions.
4. Any slopes greater than 3 degrees with slope dimension drawn between the posts.
5. Inside to inside gate dimensions with any slope dimensions as previously illustrated in Lesson 3.

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