

# How to install a sign on two posts

**First and foremost: call 811 before you dig** and have the area surveyed for buried utilities. Damaging underground cables can be dangerous and is very expensive. YOU are responsible for the cost of the repairs, and fiber optic cables can cost thousands to repair. Your insurance may not cover the cost if you fail to call for a cable survey.

**Once on site**, measure the distance between the centers of the sign posts. Use spray paint to mark two dots on the ground at this measurement. Spray a 10-in.-diameter circle around each.

**Use the posthole digger** or auger to dig a hole in each of these circles. Of course, if the sign is on a grade, one hole will have to be deeper than the other. Dig the shallow hole first to the depth recommended by the sign manufacturer. In firm soil, the hole should be a minimum of 22-in. deep for a small sign on 4x4 or 5x5 posts. In sandy soil, deeper holes will be necessary.

**The hole should be 7 to 8 inches** in diameter for a 4x4 post or 8 to 10 inches in diameter for 5-in. posts. Dig the holes straight down and make them the same diameter at the bottom as they are at the top. This makes it easier to adjust the position of the sign and ensures that there will be enough area around the posts for the concrete. Larger holes also help prevent dirt from crumbling off the sides when installing the post.

**Use one of the 48-in.-long 2x4s** to tamp any loose dirt in the bottom of the hole. Make the bottom of the hole as flat and firm as possible. Leave that 2x4 resting in the hole.

**Now dig the deeper hole.** Check the approximate depth of that hole by placing the other 48-in. 2x4 in it, then laying the long 2x4 across the 2x4s that are resting in the holes. Use the level to tell if you need to add or remove dirt from the second hole.

**Once the hole depths are close to level**, use the 2x4 in the second hole to pack the dirt in the bottom of the hole. Recheck for level and adjust by adding or removing dirt until you have a perfect level reading. If the soil is soft or sandy, add two inches of dry concrete mix to the bottom of the holes. If you're using hollow PVC posts, this will keep them from settling. Recheck the level reading again.

**Once the holes are perfectly level**, place the posts in the hole. Add about 6 inches of dry concrete mix around each post. Use the level to check that the posts are plumb both front to back and left to right. Add a little water around each post and recheck for plumb. Larger signs may need bracing, especially on windy days, while the concrete hardens.

**Continue adding dry concrete mix** and water until you fill each hole with concrete. Bringing the concrete up to grade prevents grass from growing too close to the post.

**Finish by wiping any concrete** or dirt from the sign or posts. Dispose of the dirt on the tarp, clean your tools, and give yourself a hand for a job well done.

## Tools & materials

**Post hole digger**, or gas-powered auger

**Shovel**, rake, gloves

**Basic hand tools:** tape measure, level, hammer, screwdriver, handsaw, hacksaw, pliers and any other tools necessary for assembly of the sign

**Cordless drill/screwdriver**

**Can of spray paint** to mark holes

**Small tarp** to handle the dirt that is removed from the holes, which makes cleanup easier

**Quick-setting concrete mix** One 40-lb. bag of and 1 gallon of water per hole

**Two 2x4s**, each 48 inches in length

**One straight 2x4** long enough to span the between the holes plus 2 feet

**A helper:** Even small signs mounted on their posts are a two-person project. Heavier or taller signs may require additional help or a mechanical lift.

