

Carolina Fence Company Details Fence Requirements on New Construction Sites

September 02, 2026

SUMMERVILLE, SC - September 02, 2026 -

Carolina Fence Company has outlined how ground conditions on newly built residential lots change what fence installation requires, as construction continues across two of South Carolina's fastest-growing counties. Berkeley and Dorchester counties have ranked among the state's leaders in population growth in recent U.S. Census Bureau estimates, and much of that growth has taken the form of master-planned communities built on land that was graded and filled before construction began.

The distinction matters because filled ground behaves differently from undisturbed native soil. Fill is placed and compacted mechanically, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service classifies made land and altered soils separately from native series in its Web Soil Survey for that reason. Compaction is rarely uniform across a graded lot. Fill may sit several feet deep in one area and a few inches deep in another, depending on the original contour of the land.

That inconsistency affects anything set into the ground. A post placed in a fill that has not finished consolidating can settle after installation, and settlement does not occur evenly across a fence line. The visible result appears months later as a section that has begun to lean or a gate that no longer closes against its latch.

"A brand-new lot can be harder to fence correctly than a property that has been sitting for forty years," said Alex Buckman, Owner of Carolina Fence Company. "The ground looks finished because the landscaping is in, but underneath it is still moving."

Original land use adds further variation. Parcels developed from former agricultural land, wooded tracts, and low-lying ground near creeks and marshes each carry different underlying soil profiles, and those profiles persist beneath whatever fill was added above them. Drainage characteristics in particular tend to reflect the original ground rather than the surface it now supports.

Depth to the seasonal high water table is among the properties NRCS reports by mapped soil unit, and it varies considerably across the Lowcountry. Where that depth is shallow, the lower portion of a post spends part of the year in saturated conditions, and saturated ground provides less lateral support than dry ground of the same texture.

Carolina Fence Company evaluates site conditions during its initial design and estimate, before a fence line is laid out. The assessment covers existing survey information, easement locations and utility markings, along with the ground conditions that determine post depth and setting technique at each location along the run.

Survey references on new construction sites can be difficult to rely on. Stakes placed during development are frequently disturbed or removed during the final stages of home construction, driveway installation and landscaping. Where current boundary information is not available, a fence line established from assumed property lines carries the risk of encroaching on adjoining property or into an easement.

Sequencing presents a further consideration on active sites. Driveway grades, walkway elevations and landscaping plans can all change the clearance a gate needs after a fence line has already been set. Carolina Fence Company installs swing, slide, cantilever, bi-fold and pedestrian gate systems, and gate placement on new construction is coordinated against work still to be completed by other trades.

"The order things happen in matters more on a new build than most people expect," Buckman said. "A gate that swings properly in March may not clear a walkway that gets poured in May."

Property owners building or purchasing newly constructed homes can benefit from establishing the fence line before landscaping and hardscaping are finished, when final grades are known and the ground has had time to settle.

Carolina Fence Company is a family-owned fence contractor with 21 years in business, serving Charleston and Dorchester counties. A member of the American Fence Association, the company installs residential and commercial fencing in wood, vinyl, composite, aluminum, ornamental iron, chain link and split rail, along with gates, fence maintenance, and tear-out and disposal. The company provides free estimates.

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