Preparing Your Garden for a Professional Fence Installation in Derby

Why preparation matters before a fence installation

A new fence can transform the look of a property, add privacy, and define boundaries. But the quality of the finished job depends heavily on what happens before the first post is set. In the Derby area, where soil conditions and property layouts vary, taking time to prepare properly makes the difference between a fence that stands straight for years and one that causes trouble from the start.

Whether you are replacing an old boundary or installing a fence for the first time, the steps you take before the installers arrive will save time, prevent delays, and help the work go smoothly. Below is a practical guide to getting your garden ready for a professional fence installation.

Mark out the boundary line clearly

The first thing to sort out is exactly where the fence will go. Even if you have an existing fence, the boundary line can shift over time as posts rot and panels sag. Before any digging starts, check your property deeds or the land registry plan to confirm the legal boundary. If there is any doubt, speak with your neighbour to agree on the line. A disagreement later is much harder to resolve than a conversation before work begins.

Once you know the line, mark it with string lines or marker flags. This gives the installation team a clear guide and helps them plan post positions. It also lets you spot any issues early, such as trees, walls, or other obstructions that sit on or near the boundary.

Clear the area thoroughly

A clean workspace is essential for a tidy installation. Remove anything that could get in the way: plant pots, garden furniture, bins, and children's toys. Cut back any overhanging branches, ivy, or other vegetation that touches the fence line. For hedges that border the boundary, trim them back at least a foot from where the fence will sit. The installers need room to move and dig, and they should not have to work around overgrown plants.



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If there is an old fence in place, decide whether you will remove it yourself or leave it to the installation team. Many professionals include removal in their quote, but if you want to save on labour, you can take down old panels and posts yourself. Just be careful with concrete posts,

they are heavy and can be awkward to handle without the right tools. Also, check if the old fence contains any treated timber that needs special disposal.

Check underground services before any digging

Digging post holes blindly is risky. Gas pipes, water mains, electricity cables, and telecom lines can run just below the surface, especially near the boundary of a property. In Derby, many older homes have services that were laid decades ago, and their exact routes are not always obvious.

Before the installation date, contact the relevant utility companies or use a private service to locate underground cables and pipes. Mark the positions clearly so the installers know where they can dig safely. This step is not optional, it prevents accidents and costly repairs. Most professional fencing companies will ask if you have done this, and they may refuse to dig until it is sorted.

Plan for waste removal and material storage

Fence installation generates waste: old panels, broken posts, gravel boards, and packaging from new materials. Decide in advance where this waste will go. If you have a skip on site, position it close to the work area but not so close that it blocks access. If the installers are taking the waste away, confirm this in writing and check whether there is an extra charge.

New materials also need a dry, level place to sit until they are used. Timber panels and concrete posts are heavy and should be stored flat on a surface that will not stain or warp them. Avoid leaving them on damp grass for days, as moisture can seep into the timber. If rain is forecast, cover the stack with a tarp but allow air to circulate so mould does not start.

Consider the ground conditions

The soil in Derby varies from clay to loam to chalk, and each type affects how deep the post holes need to be and how long the concrete takes to set. Clay soil, for example, expands when wet and shrinks when dry, which can shift posts if the concrete is not deep enough. A professional installer will assess the ground on the day, but you can help by making sure the surface is as even as possible. Remove large stones, roots, and debris from the topsoil along the fence line.

If the ground is very wet, consider postponing the installation until it dries out. Working in mud is messy and can lead to posts that are not set as firmly as they should be. A dry week before the job starts is ideal.

Talk through the details with the installer

Before any work begins, have a clear conversation with the fencing company about the specifics of the job. Confirm the post spacing, the type of concrete mix they use, and whether they will fit gravel boards between the panels and the ground. Gravel boards are a simple way to keep timber panels from rotting where they meet the soil, and they can add years to the life of a fence.



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Ask about the height of the fence and whether the panels will sit flush with the ground or leave a gap. A gap at the bottom helps with drainage and prevents the timber from sitting in damp soil, but it can also let small animals through. Talk through the trade-offs so the finished fence works for your garden, not just against the spec sheet.

For residents of Derby and the surrounding areas, companies like Ashdale Fencing bring local knowledge of the soil and typical boundary conditions. Their experience with the area means they can advise on practical details that a general contractor might miss. One example is choosing between concrete posts and timber posts: concrete lasts longer but is harder to adjust later, while timber is more forgiving but needs regular treatment. A good installer will explain the pros and cons rather than pushing one option.

Prepare for the installation day itself

On the day the work starts, make sure the access route to the fence line is clear. If the installers need to bring a mixer or barrow through a gate, check that the gate opens fully. If there is a locked side gate, leave it unlocked or arrange for someone to let them in. Also, think about where the team can park. A van loaded with posts and panels needs to be close to the work area, but it should not block the road or your driveway.

Keep pets indoors while the work is going on. The noise of mixers and saws can spook animals, and open gates are a risk. It is simpler to keep cats and dogs inside for the day than to worry about them escaping.

Know what to look for during the installation

You do not need to supervise every moment, but checking a few things as the work progresses helps catch any issues. Watch that the posts are set vertically using a spirit level. The concrete should be mixed to a consistent, stiff consistency, not too wet, which weakens the set. Post spacing should be even, usually around six feet apart for standard panels, though the exact gap depends on the panel width used.

If the installers are fitting gravel boards, check that they sit level and are not cracked. Timber panels should be fixed securely to the posts with galvanised nails or screws; rust-prone fixings will fail long before the panels do. A quick walk along the line after the first few panels are up will show you whether the alignment looks straight from both sides.

After the installation

Once the fence is up, leave the concrete to cure for at least 24 to 48 hours before putting any weight against the posts. If the weather is hot, the concrete may dry too fast and crack; if it is cold, the set will take longer. The installer should tell you the recommended curing time based on the conditions.



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Clean up any leftover materials promptly. Concrete splashes on the ground or on nearby plants are unsightly and can be hard to remove once dry. Most professional teams will tidy up as they go, but it is worth confirming this before they leave.

Finally, take a few photos of the finished fence from different angles. These can be useful for insurance purposes or if you ever need to replace a section later. They also give you a record of the original condition in case any issues arise with the workmanship.

Preparing your garden for a fence installation does not have to be complicated. A clear boundary, a clean workspace, and a good conversation with the installer cover most of the ground. For homeowners in Derby, working with a company that knows the local conditions, such as Ashdale Fencing, can make the whole process simpler and the result more reliable. Taking these steps before the installers arrive means the work can start on time and finish to a standard that lasts.