Fence Inspection Checklist: Posts Panels and Gates

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Property

INSPECTION DATE

INSPECTED BY

PROPERTY ADDRESS

OCCUPANCY

FENCE TYPE

RECORDED HEIGHT (MEASURED)

HOW YOU WALKED THE FENCE

WEATHER DURING THE WALK

☐ Owner or agent present

☐ Pool or spa on the property

Posts

Item	OK	Defect	N/A	Notes
Line posts reasonably plumb along the run you walked	☐	☐	☐	
Posts do not rock or lean when pushed at waist height	☐	☐	☐	
Wood posts not soft, crumbling, or hollow at and just above grade	☐	☐	☐	
Visible concrete at the post slopes away and does not hold water	☐	☐	☐	
Posts not obviously lifted, tilted, or heaved from freeze-thaw	☐	☐	☐	
Post tops capped or otherwise shedding water	☐	☐	☐	
Corner, end, and gate posts present and not failing on their own	☐	☐	☐	
If an end tag is visible, it is ground-contact treatment, or the post is not wood	☐	☐	☐	

Panels and pickets

Item	OK	Defect	N/A	Notes
Panel or picket type identified for the runs you walked	☐	☐	☐	
Panels or pickets still fastened to the rails or posts	☐	☐	☐	
No large missing, broken, or hanging boards or slats	☐	☐	☐	
Bottom of wood boards not decayed from soil or splash	☐	☐	☐	
Boards not heavily warped, bowed, or sprung off the rails	☐	☐	☐	
Pickets have fasteners at the rails you can see	☐	☐	☐	
Chain-link fabric taut and tied, or vinyl slats not cracked off the rails	☐	☐	☐	

Whole panels not racked or leaning as a unit from a failed post	☐	☐	☐	

Rails

Item	OK	Defect	N/A	Notes
Horizontal rails or a top rail present for the fence type	☐	☐	☐	
Rails still attached to the posts	☐	☐	☐	
Rail-to-post connections look complete, not hanging on one nail	☐	☐	☐	
Rails not sagging or rolling between posts	☐	☐	☐	
Rails not split at the ends or decayed, especially the bottom rail	☐	☐	☐	
Bottom rail not buried in soil or sitting in wet debris	☐	☐	☐	
Rail joints land on posts and are not all stacked on one post if you can see them	☐	☐	☐	

Gates

Item	OK	Defect	N/A	Notes
Each pedestrian or vehicle gate identified, or N/A if none	☐	☐	☐	
Gates open and close without binding on the ground	☐	☐	☐	
Gate frames reasonably square, not dropped at the latch	☐	☐	☐	
Hinges attached, not bent, and not pulling out of the post	☐	☐	☐	
Latch, cane bolt, or drop rod engages the post or keeper	☐	☐	☐	
Hinge and latch posts plumb and not the cause of misalignment	☐	☐	☐	
Gate bottom clears grade; soil and debris not piled in the swing path	☐	☐	☐	
Double-gate inactive leaf has a drop rod or other hold-down if the opening is a pair	☐	☐	☐	

Hardware

Item	OK	Defect	N/A	Notes
Visible nails or screws not heavily rusted through or backing out	☐	☐	☐	
Visible hardware looks exterior-rated, not bright common nails failing in treated wood	☐	☐	☐	
Hinge pins and leaves not seized, broken, or missing	☐	☐	☐	
Latch springs, bars, keepers, and drop rods operate	☐	☐	☐	
Post caps, finials, and trim still attached where they were installed	☐	☐	☐	
Vinyl or metal brackets, tension bands, and rail clips not cracked or missing	☐	☐	☐	

Grade and vegetation

Item	OK	Defect	N/A	Notes

Soil, mulch, and debris not piled against wood posts or the bottom of boards	☐	☐	☐	
Water is not undermining post bases or washing soil from visible footings	☐	☐	☐	
Fence and nearby grade are not directing water at the house foundation	☐	☐	☐	
Shrubs and vines not holding the fence wet or pulling it out of line	☐	☐	☐	
Trees, trunks, or obvious roots not pushing the fence out of line	☐	☐	☐	
Stored items and dense growth not hiding a failed run you could otherwise walk	☐	☐	☐	
Retaining walls or steep banks along the fence not collapsing into the run	☐	☐	☐	

Pool fence (N/A if no pool)

Item	OK	Defect	N/A	Notes
Pool barrier at least 48 inches above grade on the outside, if you measured	☐	☐	☐	
Openings in the pool barrier do not pass a 4-inch sphere, if you checked	☐	☐	☐	
Bottom clearance measured: 2 inches over grass or gravel, 4 inches over solid paving	☐	☐	☐	
Pedestrian pool gates self-close, self-latch, and open away from the pool	☐	☐	☐	
Pool-gate latch location recorded; CPSC and ISPSC numbers are not the same	☐	☐	☐	
No permanent structures or stored objects that make the pool barrier easy to climb from outside	☐	☐	☐	
If rails are less than 45 inches apart, they face the pool and vertical gaps are not more than 1 3/4 inches	☐	☐	☐	
If the house is a barrier side, doors to the pool have alarms or self-closing hardware, or the fence isolates the water	☐	☐	☐	

Findings and sign-off

FINDINGS

ACTION

INSPECTOR SIGNATURE

OWNER OR AGENT SIGNATURE

TIME SIGNED

Reference only. Verify against local codes, a licensed inspector or a qualified contractor.