

Chapter 5 – Installing Top Plates

Requirements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before installing top plates, VERIFY WALL INTERSECTIONS ARE PLUMB and have been marked OK. 2. Walls must be tied together by nailing overlapping top plates to the tops of the walls. 3. Top plates at the intersection of interior and exterior walls are done first. 4. Top plates on all bearing walls <u>must</u> extend a minimum of 4' on each side of the wall plate joint and at each corner. 5. Top plates on non-bearing walls that extend into the 2" notch of the exterior top plates must be at least 16" long. 6. At all corners of exterior walls and at all corners and intersections of inside walls, the top plate must cross the joint of the wall plates below. 7. Where interior walls intersect exterior walls, create a notch 2" deep in the top plate of the exterior wall so it can receive the intersecting interior wall top plate. 8. Verify that the interior wall is plumb before locating and cutting the notch. <p style="text-align: center;">NOTE: Notching 2" deep leaves 3½" of material on exterior 2x6 top plates</p>
Installing Top Plates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. To locate the notches in exterior wall plates, lay the exterior wall top plate on the wall in its final position. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mark the location of each intersecting interior wall. b. Place the top plate on the deck, and using a speed square, mark lines at each location. c. Set the blade of a circular saw to a 2" depth. d. Cut the marked edge of the top plate at the <u>outside</u> of each line (this should allow clearance for the width of the intersecting top plate). e. Make multiple cross-cuts between these two cuts and knock the piece out with a hammer. 10. Nail the wall top plates, using three 16d or 3¼" collated nails across the 2x6 plates and two nails across 2x4 plates. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Before nailing, be sure the <u>interior</u> edges of the top plates are flush with the edges of the plates below and that interior walls are tight to the exterior walls. b. Nail at each intersection of top plates and at each stud location. c. Nail two to four pairs of nails across exterior window and door headers. <p style="text-align: center;">NOTE: Occasionally the house will include a 2x4 interior wall butting against the end of a 2x6 plumbing wall (in a straight line). In this case, install a 2x4 top plate the full length of the wall, on the <u>flush</u> side. Install a 2" wide "filler" on the 2x6 section of the wall (necessary to provide nailing surface for wall sheetrock).</p>

Quality Points

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- BEFORE installing Top Plates be sure ALL WALL INTERSECTIONS ARE PLUMB and marked OK or Painted GREEN.
- Intersections of interior and exterior walls completed first
- Top plates on bearing walls extend minimum 4' on each side of wall plate joint and each corner
- Non-bearing wall top plates extending into 2" notch of exterior top plates are minimum 16" long
- Interior top plates notched into exterior top plates 2" and nailed to exterior wall upper plate
- Top plate crosses joint of wall plate joints below at all corners of exterior walls and all corners and intersections of interior walls
- Interior edges of top plates are flush with edges of plates below, interior walls are tight to exterior walls
- Top plates nailed with three 16d or 3¼" collated nails across 2x6 plates and two nails across 2x4 plates