

The 7 Big Mistakes in Buying a Home Gate



There's definitely a right way to build anything, and that's particularly true with fences and gates.

GatesLosAngeles, a division of Mulholland Security Centers, Inc., has been fabricating and installing fences and gates throughout Southern California for nearly 2 decades!

About 70% of our business has been in repairing and reinstalling gates that have been done by other people.

We've put together a brief report about the more common and most expensive mistakes that we have seen in fence and gate making.

talk about their success... even with strangers.

1. The gate is poorly engineered out of cheap or improper materials.

Sad, but true: Gates are sometimes put together by contractors wanting to make as much money as they possibly can out of the deal they made with you.



Your main defense against making such mistakes is in your knowledge about them.

Unfortunately, unless you know what you're looking for, you won't see this.

Another good defense is to work with people who have been successful at doing this with your friends, family and neighbors.

We have found that people are proud of their gates when they have been done correctly and are happy to



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Cheaper wood or wood that has not been properly cured (“green wood”) or sealed is one reason you see a lot of bad looking fences and gates around town.

One or two hot Southern California summers followed by even mildly wet winters (or just your sprinkler water hitting them) can have your gate warp out of shape and end up looking (and working) very bad, very fast.

Metal gates should also be of high gauge and high alloy. A thin gauge gate will slowly bend out of shape as it

is opened and closed over a few years and finally stop working as the bottom of it fails to clear the pavement or as the two gates fail to meet in the

wear and tear of the climate or regular use sets in, you will be regretting not finding a better contractor.

Make Sure to Get the RIGHT materials!

2. The slope of the gate has not been properly calculated.

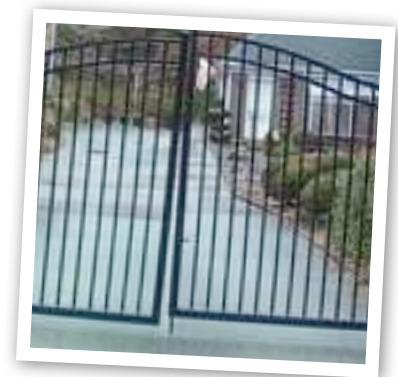
When you are building a gate to be installed on a sloped or hilly terrain, it has to be engineered and fabricated “just right”.

It's challenging to make a gate on a hill. The engineering requires that you accommodate the curves of the

middle in order to be latched.

A gate that has been put together out of improper materials can still look good and even operate well for a few months or even a year.

So, it might look perfect when first installed! But look at it a year or so later and it's depressing. Once the



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land and still manage to make the fence look nice.

When you drive around town, you will see that many hill side gates are left open . This is because these poorly engineered gates scrape the driveway when being opened and closed and, as a result, they are left open all the time, defeating the security and safety aspect of the gate.

3. The vertical posts (balustrades) and the horizontal steps (rails) of the fence gate are not plumb or are not parallel.

"Not such a big deal!", you may think! But, it is! Getting the fence and gate "right" in this respect influences the strength of them, yes; but it also markedly effects the beauty. It's amazing how well our eyes see inaccuracies in angle and in being parallel, even if it's just by a few degrees!

4. The gate has been improperly finished.

Whether it's for a wood or metal gate there is a proper finish to be considered; sometimes for beauty, sometimes for protection, typically for both. It's another place where some

contractors attempt to save money by cutting costs and sacrificing quality.

You want to make sure your gate and fence is sealed with the correct finish to protect your gate from the elements and give it a longer life. (It should be noted that even the highest quality finishes wear out over time and need to be reapplied. Make sure you understand the "life expectancy" for the finish being used on your gate and fence.)

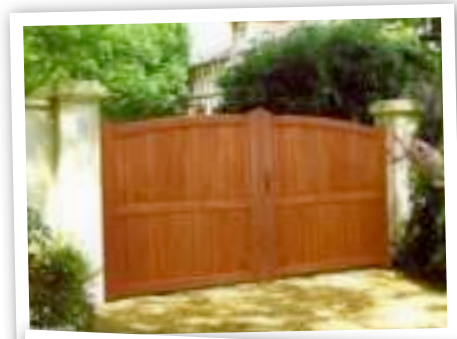
5. The correct motor for the gate has not been installed.

Smaller gates on level property, even larger gates, can be installed without a motor and not require a lot of muscle to open and close. But, some of us are a little more dainty than

others! And, (it's rumored), we do get older!

Also, to add to the list of problems encountered in gates for property on hilly terrain, for a gate of any real size, you're going to need a strong motor (or a really strong man!) to open and shut your gate. That's because, either to open or close your gate, your motor's going to be working "uphill" (more difficult) and the motor

The contractor really needs to be a CRAFTSMAN!



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will also be working to "brake" your gate from opening or closing too quickly.

Motors for gates prices vary, but the ones that can handle "less weight, less often" are less expensive. So, a contractor who is inexperienced with gate manufacture and installation can, to minimize costs, choose an incorrect motor for your gate.

In choosing the correct motor you can also spend money unwisely by not taking into consideration the frequency of use. A motor designed for a community gate that is used dozens if not hundreds of times a day would be an overkill for a single residency and much more expensive.

So, you can get too weak a motor for your gate, or one too strong! Either way you end up spending too much money as the too weak one is going to wear out quickly.

6. A firm foundation.

Gates weigh a lot. And the posts that the gate swings from must be firmly anchored into the ground so that it never begins to sag or stoop.

And, the longer the gate the more this is a problem.

To get a clear understanding of this, pick up a paint bucket or item of similar weight and bring it up directly to your waist. You'll probably be able to hold it there for quite some period of time.

Now, take that same object and attempt to hold it at arm's length and

parallel to the ground. Your arm and then your back will begin to tire. You'll start getting the idea of how strong your gate must be and how firmly your post must be in the ground.

So, a gate post must be adequately footed in the ground.

Also of importance here is the material of this post. The moisture, insects and even bacteria that is present in the ground can really create a lot of trouble for a gate or fence. Once again, it's choosing the right materials.

Our Gate Foundation
Must Be Made Out
of the RIGHT
materials.

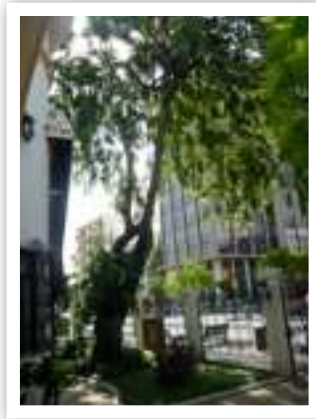


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7. Bad Design Integration

Even in Beverly Hills and other beautiful neighborhoods, we see many fences and gates that have been installed without any regard to the overall design of the buildings being protected or of the landscape that is being surrounded by the fencing.



When confronted with all the choices and decisions that are made in the design of a fence and gate, some have a really difficult time; they just don't know how to figure it out so that it looks perfect against the backdrop of their home.

So, this is a point where it would be best if your contractor was an artist as well!



It's a little like wearing the wrong belt at a posh party. It keeps your pants up, but you might look kind of funny!

But sometimes a better analogy might be that the gate owner has been mixing plaids.

Yes, much of design is a matter of personal taste and these can override the rules of design.

Most of us are not "brought up" in households with advice or education about architecture or property design.



GatesLosAngeles.com 1-866-980-4283

*Call Kathy, ask about the party
CALL Gates LA -
866-980-4283 - Have them give us
an estimate*

*Make sure to ask to see their
guaranty and also get a list of
customers to call and see their
gates!*

Contractor or Craftsman?

When you experience first-hand the fabrication and installation of a gate, you see that it is more the work of craftsmen than it is of a contractor.

We saved the most important for last. Because, if you really chose the right contractor, you wouldn't have to concern yourself with any of this!

There's a few things that you can do to make your gate shopping be an easier and pleasant experience.

When you look through the net for gate installers in your area, look for the main things that show they are a reputable company. Do this before you even make a phone call.

- Is their contractor's license displayed on their site?
- Do they have a Better Business Bureau Rating? If so, what is it? (The BBB's highest rating is A+.)
- Does their site state that they are insured and that they offer a written guarantee?
- Are they promoting that they are on AngiesList? If so, have they earned any Superior Service Awards?

If they have these on their site, give them a call and arrange a presentation.

Beyond looking at their pretty pictures, you want to see for yourself the work they have done and talk with their customers. The best gate people will have plenty of people that will be happy to talk with you and show off their beautiful gates.

You also want to see their paperwork, their licenses and insurance, a written guarantee, an itemized contract where everything you have agreed upon orally is in writing; even the list of materials to be used!

And ask all the questions you want. The more informed you are, the more confident you will be when it comes time to make a decision.

Call us at Gates Los Angeles and ask us for a presentation. We're happy to answer all your questions, show you everything we do, and introduce you to many very pleased customers... that's the only kind of customer we have: HAPPY!

Call us at 1-866-980-4283 to arrange a presentation.