

**Chapter 5 – Installing Top Plates**

Requirements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Walls must be tied together by nailing overlapping top plates to the tops of the walls.</li> <li>2. Top plates at the intersection of interior and exterior walls are done first.</li> <li>3. 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.</li> <li>4. Top plates on non-bearing walls that extend into the 2" notch of the exterior top plates must be at least 16" long.</li> <li>5. 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.</li> <li>6. 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.</li> <li>7. Verify that the interior wall is plumb before locating and cutting the notch.</li> </ol> <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"> <li>8. 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"> <li>a. Mark the location of each intersecting interior wall.</li> <li>b. Place the top plate on the deck, and using a speed square, mark lines at each location.</li> <li>c. Set the blade of a circular saw to a 2" depth.</li> <li>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).</li> <li>e. Make multiple cross-cuts between these two cuts and knock the piece out with a hammer.</li> </ol> </li> <li>9. Nail the wall top plates, using three 16d or 3¼" Paslode nails across the 2x6 plates and two nails across 2x4 plates.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>b. Nail at each intersection of top plates and at each stud location.</li> <li>c. Nail two to four pairs of nails across exterior window and door headers.</li> </ol> <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> </li> </ol>

## Quality Points

### Chapter 5 – Installing Top Plates

- 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" Paslode nails across 2x6 plates and two nails across 2x4 plates