



Know the Difference: A Complete Guide to Rail Clamps



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A complete overview guide on the different types of clamps typically used on a chain link fence including: End Rails, Line Rails, Corner Rails as well as other types of clamps such as Panel and Kennel Clamps.

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What are Rail Clamps?

Rail clamps are types of holders for fence lines that hold rails, posts, and panels in place, overall creating a joint system for fence lines. Rails along chain link fences serve as a structural support against high winds, impacts, and its own weight if it's a taller fence.

Rail clamps hold on to these rails, conjoining them to end posts, line posts, or corner posts. There are also certain clamps that are designed for connecting segmented panels. Secured by a simple carriage bolt and nut, they are inexpensive solutions that don't require welding.



Most Common Rail Clamps:

- **End Clamps:** End rail clamps are used to connect a single horizontal rail to the end post of a chain link fence.
- **Corner Clamps:** Corner clamps are specifically designed for connecting two horizontal rails that meet at a corner of the fence.
- **Line Clamps:** Attached to posts along the fence line, Line Clamps help provide structure by holding up rails along the whole length of the fence.
- **Panel Clamps:** Sometimes referred to as Kennel Clamps, Panel Clamps allow you to connect two chain link fence panels together.

How to Install Rail Clamps?



First, measure your post and rail for the correct clamp dimensions to ensure a tight fit. Be sure to account for the listed OD sizes when purchasing your clamps, not just the nominal size.



After ensuring that you've measured your post and rail, place both sides of the clamp around your post and rail, ensuring that the screw holes are aligned properly. Neither clamp piece should be touching.



Finally, secure your clamps by placing your carriage bolt through the holes and securing it with a nut. The bolt should not be able to move more than a slight amount, otherwise it is the incorrect size.

Line Rail Clamps

Line rail clamps serve as one of the most crucial pieces of structural support on a chain link fence. Without them, guiding support rails would have nothing to hold on to. Wrapping around the post, line rail clamps clasp on to rails using a carriage bolt to lock it in place.

For a chain link fence that utilizes a middle rail, line rail clamps are a common piece of hardware, as many are used along the length of a fence at each line post. Part of their appeal is that it eliminates the need for welding your rails in place, saving on cost and time for your projects.



Corner Rail Clamps

Corner rail clamps, much like line rail clamps, are responsible for holding up your rails along your fence line specifically at corners. Installed in the same way as line rail clamps, corner rail clamps can be installed in minutes with a carriage bolt.

These will be slightly less common than line rail clamps as there will realistically be 4 or even less corners on most fences. It's important to know that these corners are not all shaped the same. Most are 90 degrees, however some can be as few as 45 degrees depending on your needs.



End Rail Clamps

End rail clamps sit on the last post of a fence line and serve as an end point for your chain link fence rail structure. Despite being installed the same way as corner and line rail clamps, end rail clamps are the most crucial to get right as they are at the least protected part of your fence.

End rail clamps are the least common of the three primary types as most fences only requiring one per end post most of the time. It's important to only use end rails at the end of your fence line, otherwise there will be unsecured rail end holders that can weaken your fence line.





2" [1-7/8" OD] x 2" [1-7/8" OD] Panel Clamp

Panel Clamps

Panel Clamps, sometimes referred to as Kennel Clamps, are used to clamp two chain link fence panels together. If you have dog kennels, these clamps can also attach two panels together or make a kennel larger.

Often made of pressed and hot-dip galvanized steel, these clamps are meant to add structure to fence lines as they halt the independent movement of panels. Ideally, these are installed at the top and bottoms of your panels.



3/8" x 3 1/2" Carriage Nut & Bolt

Carriage Bolts

Carriage Bolts are a little different than your ordinary bolt or screw. With rounded tops, carriage bolts feature a square collar around the head that secures it into various fence pieces including all types of clamps.

When installing carriage bolts, it's important that their collars are snug in their square holes. There should be minimal movement as bolts that are too small can cause damage, additional wear, or failure for your rail clamps.

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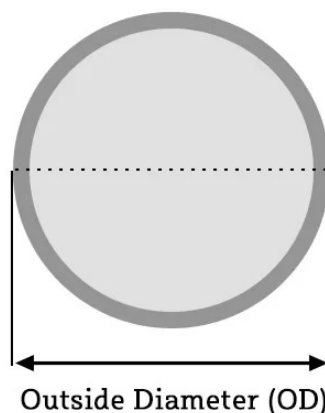
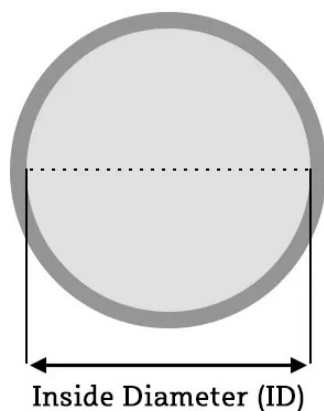
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How to Measure For a Clamp

Before trying to figure out the size of Clamp you need, it's important to understand what *Inside Diameter* (I.D) means as well as *Outside Diameter* (O.D). Inside Diameter is measured by measuring the width of the Inside of the rail from inside wall to inside wall.



Outside Diameter is measured the same way, except instead of measuring the inside wall, you measure the outer wall of your rail. Notice how in the examples below, Example B says that it is 2" but has an OD size of 1 7/8". This means that despite measuring at 2" in diameter, it will only fit around a 1 7/8" rail.

Nominal Sizes for All 5 Rail Clamps

Nominal Size	Fits Post Size (Actual OD)	Fits Rail Size (Actual OD)
1 3/8" x 1 3/8"	1 3/8" OD	1 3/8" OD
1 5/8" x 1 3/8"	1 5/8" OD	1 3/8" OD
1 5/8" x 1 5/8"	1 5/8" OD	1 5/8" OD
2" x 1 3/8"	1 7/8" OD	1 3/8" OD
2" x 1 5/8"	1 7/8" OD	1 5/8" OD
2" x 2"	1 7/8" OD	1 7/8" OD
2 1/2" x 1 3/8"	2 3/8" OD	1 3/8" OD
2 1/2" x 1 5/8"	2 3/8" OD	1 5/8" OD
2 1/2" x 2"	2 3/8" OD	1 7/8" OD
3" x 1 5/8"	2 7/8" OD	1 5/8" OD
3" x 2"	2 7/8" OD	1 7/8" OD
3 1/2" x 1 5/8"	3 1/2" OD	1 5/8" OD
4" x 1 5/8"	4" OD	1 5/8" OD
4" x 2"	4" OD	1 7/8" OD
4 1/2" x 1 5/8"	4 1/2" OD	1 5/8" OD
6 5/8" x 1 5/8"	6 5/8" OD	1 5/8" OD