



Garden Watchtower

Installation Instructions

NOTES: Please check for any damage caused by the shipping company and take appropriate steps to file a claim, if needed.

*Please call **Digsafe** and check for any underground utilities before digging anywhere.

Materials needed

Cordless drill/driver (impact as well), T25 bit, T30 bit, socket wrench or hex head socket bit that fits the Titen HD stainless steel screw anchors, auger and/or post hole shovel, spade shovel, transfer (flat) shovel, grade rake, garden rake, two 4' levels, tape measure, battery powered jigsaw with wood cutting blade, plate compactor, hand tamp, four (4) 12" x 4' sonotubes, 8 1x3x8' strapping for bracing posts (to attach braces to ground, cut off 18 inches from each piece of strapping to make 8 stakes, fashion one end of each into a point, and drive it into the ground where you want to anchor the end of the brace. Screw braces to the posts and stakes using 1-1/2" sheet rock screws), one very straight 2 x 6 x 10 for leveling the sonotubes, and forty (40) 50lb bags of fast-setting premixed concrete (*estimate*, not included). Concrete amount required may vary depending on how deep you can get the holes. Concrete amounts can be easily calculated at <http://www.quikrete.com/Calculator/Main.asp>. You will also need concrete blocks or some other items to temporarily support the deck 2 feet above the ground while you are fastening the posts to the post bases.

NOTE: that Simpson post bases are being used to fasten the watchtower posts to the concrete piers. It is advised to allow 28 days for the concrete to cure before drilling holes for the base fasteners.

Instructions

Remove items from pallet or packaging.

**Note: Keep in mind that this is a climbing element and therefore it needs a fall zone extending 6 feet out on all sides of it which is usually 12" deep. You can create a container for this material by using 2 layers of 6x6 retainers made for this purpose (which we can provide), or by digging a hole 12" deep. If you choose to dig the 12" deep hole, keep in mind that it needs to be drained so it doesn't fill up with rainwater or snow melt. We typically use four-inch, sleeved, perforated flexible drain pipe.*

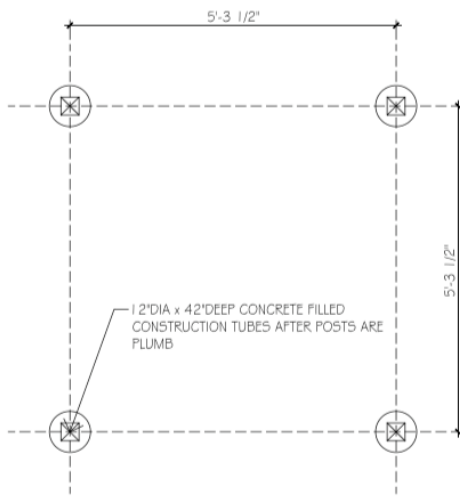
NOTE: the layout depicted below is for the 6' x 6' Watchtower. If you are installing a 4' x 4' Watchtower, obviously adjust the measurements to coincide.

Determining placement of watchtower and creating the fall zone.

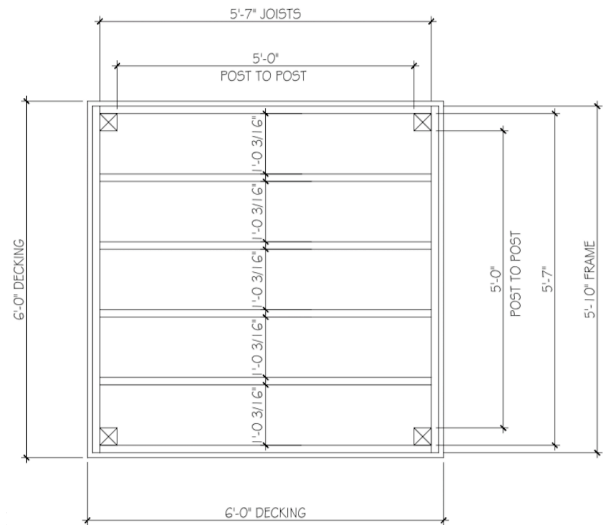
1. Locate the watchtower deck where you like, set it down, orient it as desired, and mark the four corner posts on the ground referencing the images below.

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2. Use your tape measure to mark six feet out in all directions from the deck (not from the posts). This is your fall zone. Keep in mind that if you add any accessories, the fall zone needs to extend six feet out from those items as well.
3. Excavate your fall zone and remove material, or use retainers to build up your fall zone. Determine drainage method. If you're using retainers to build up the fall zone, you probably don't need drainage, as water will drain out through the retainers.

Marking, excavating, and prepping post holes.

4. Now that your fall zone is established, move the watchtower deck back to the location you chose in step 1. You may have to remark the four corner posts on the ground.
5. Move the watchtower deck away from the marked post locations to make room to dig the post holes using an auger or post hole digger.
6. Dig 10 the four post hole diameters to 1'-2" (so the sonotubes fit in them) and post hole depths to approximately 4'-0" (depending on region). The bottom of hole should "flare" out a little to create a bell shape to prevent frost heaving the post where applicable. Check local codes for the frost line in your area.
7. Using the hand tamp, compact any loose material at the bottom of the hole, then fill the bottom of hole with six inches of drainage stone, and carefully insert the 4 sonotubes into the holes making sure not to knock excess dirt into the holes, but if you do, do your best to clean out the dirt. The top edges of the sonotubes should be at least 4 inches above the bottom of the fall zone.
8. Because you dug the holes slightly bigger than the tubes, make sure you backfill all around the outside of the tubes so they are tightly fixed in the holes.

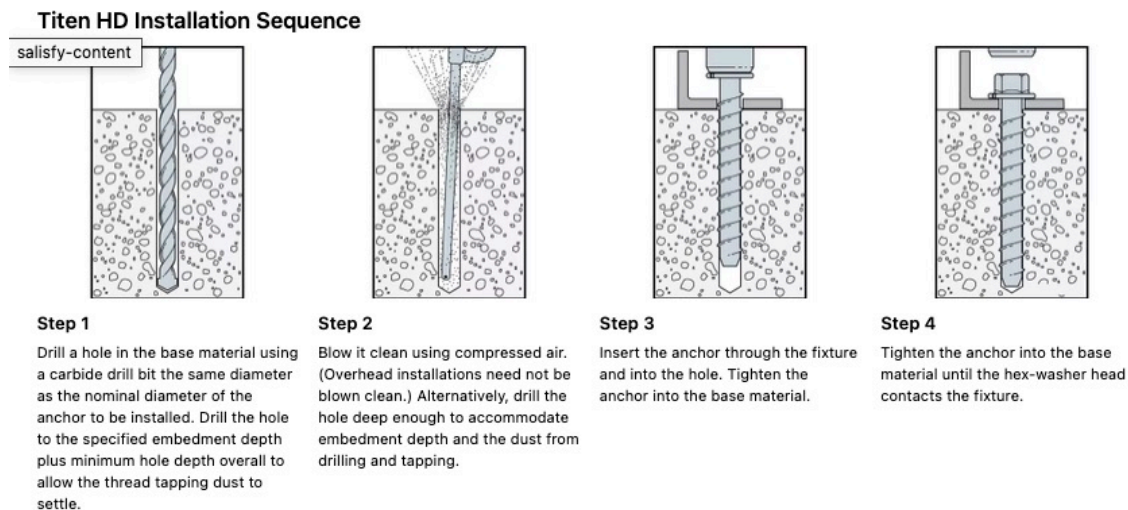
Pouring the 4 footings

9. At the end of all this, it's critical that the top of all four concrete piers are exactly level, so there are a number of ways to achieve this. We will give you one, but do whatever feels right for you.

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- Use the 2x6x10 and your level to check whether the tops of the sonotubes are level, 4" below the top of the fall zone material (which will theoretically be level with the surrounding grade). If they are not, find the lowest one, turn the 2x6x10 on its edge, and set one end of it on top of it with the level on top of the board's edge, and rotate the board to all the other sonotubes marking each of them using the underside of the board as the marketing guide. Do this on both sides of all sonotubes, then use your tape measure to measure down from the top edge of the sonotubes, and mark lines all the way around each tube. Use your jigsaw to cut the tubes where marked. Recheck that all are now at the same level.
- Fill 1/4 of each hole with fast setting concrete, adding water per instructions on bag, and use a stick or a piece of rebar, or the handle of a shovel to mix the water in concrete. Fill the rest of the holes with concrete per instructions on bag, and bring the concrete up so it's level with the tops of the sonotubes
- Let cure for 28 days.
- Have the four (4) Simpson ABV standoff post bases and the 4 Titen HD stainless steel screw anchors nearby and ready to go.
- Once again, carry your deck over to the concrete piers, and align it so that the corner post holes are exactly centered on the concrete piers. Reach down through the holes with a pencil or with some other tool that can mark the exact center of the post holes, and make a pronounced mark.
- Find the 5/8" x 5" carbide tipped bit, and drill a full depth (5" deep) hole at the mark on top of each concrete pier.



- Find the Simpson ABV standoff post bases, the Titen HD stainless steel screw anchors, and your wrench/socket, and install the anchors through the post bases and into the holes in the concrete. Align all the post bases in the same direction, and then tighten securely, but do not overtighten
- Once again, bring your deck over and align it over the tops of the Post bases
- Now you will need to use your concrete blocks to keep the bottom of the deck about 18 inches above the post bases.

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19. Feed the 6 x 6 posts through each of the post holes at the corners of the deck, and fasten the post anchors to the posts using the provided hardware. The posts will be top-heavy, so you may want to use your strapping and stakes to temporarily brace the posts while you're working on everything.

Installing the railings.

20. Fasten the pre assembled railings to the posts using the predrilled holes and screws provided, following the marks on the rails and the posts.

21. After everything is fastened and ready for the next step, place the levels on top of the deck 90° to each other. You'll need enough people (or a piece of machinery) to carefully slide the deck up the posts until you see the marks on the posts which should be level with the top of the deck. Use the GRK screws provided to fasten the deck to the posts.

22. Go back through the parts you assembled and make sure everything is tightly fastened.

Installing accessories.

23. Fasten slat climb, climbing net, closed back step ladder, notched log stepper or your planned way of getting up to and down from the tower.

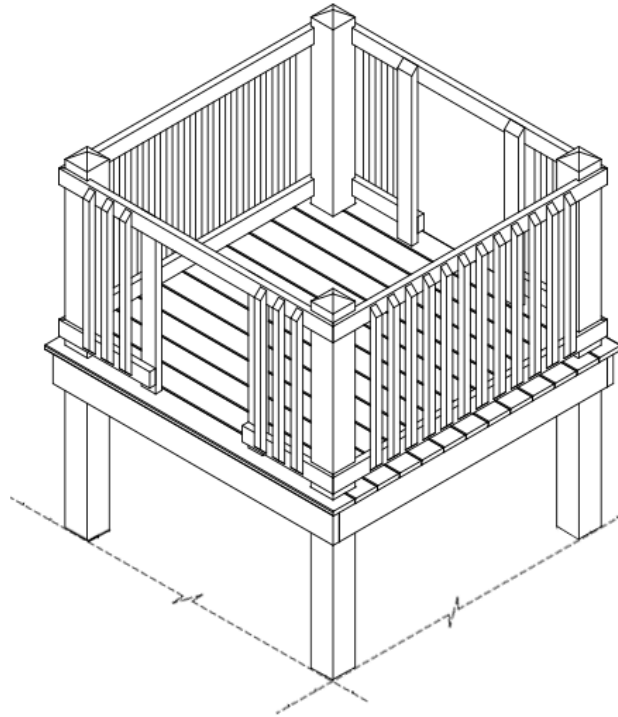
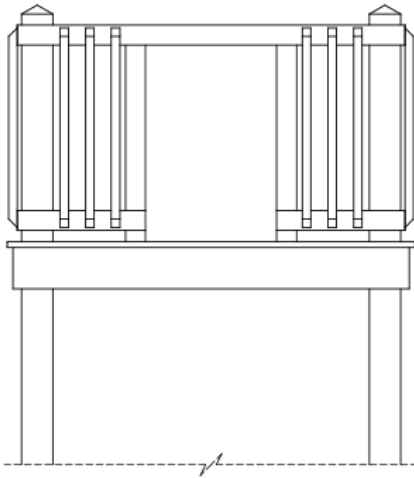
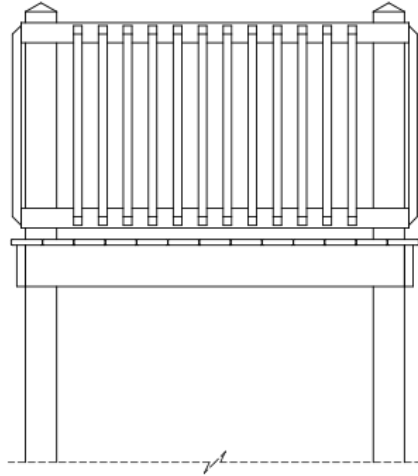
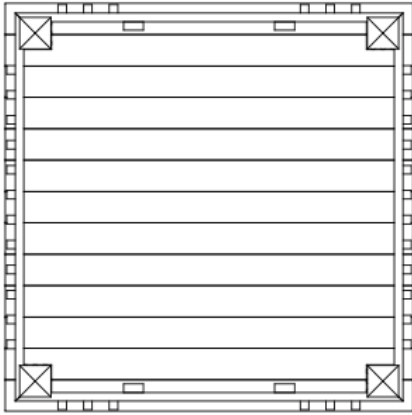
24. Install proper fall zone material per all applicable codes (typical 6'-0" from all edges of the climbing structure, as well as from the accessories)

25. All wood is treated with kid-friendly preservative, but as is the case with all wood facing the elements, it needs to be cared for, so check it periodically for rough spots, splinters, etc, and sand them out, and treat it with kid-friendly wood preservative (we have it available if you can't find it) once or twice a year to keep the wood from deteriorating.

26. Enjoy your Garden Watchtower!

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