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INTRODUCTION

I have written this guide to assist you in the building of one of the sheds from one of our web sites. This guide is by no means meant to replace local code requirements. Each state, city and town seem to have their own ideas on what a shed or even what foundations should be. Make sure you check with your local officials to determine if the method you have selected meets with local or state requirements.

I will go through each step of building a shed. Some areas are more difficult and I will spend more time and provide more details in those areas. This project is really a simple one. If you are totally unclear as to what steps to take next, send us an e-mail or head on down to your local library and you will find many good books on shed construction. I never claimed to be a writer☺

FOUNDATIONS:

Whether you decide to go with a complete concrete slab type floor and footing or use blocks or concrete pillars is up to you. I will not get into detail about soil preparation. You know the type of soil you are placing the building on and will need to take steps to insure it is prepared to support the weight of the concrete slab or the building. A foundation anchors the entire structure against settling or being turned over by the wind. It also distributes the load of the building into the ground and protects wood from direct contact with the ground. Foundations normally consist of two parts, a footing, which distributes the weight of the building underground and a platform or pier, which raises parts of the building above ground.

The length and width of the buildings stated on the plans will be to the outside edge. So if you have a plan that says, 8'x10' building, then this is the size you will want your slab or floor to be.

First I will explain a foundation where the slab and footing are poured as one.

SLAB AND FOOTING AS ONE: I will not get into the details of using batter boards, wire mesh and reinforcing bars. There are whole books written on the subject your local lumber dealer should be able to provide you with details. You can also do a search on the Internet for information.

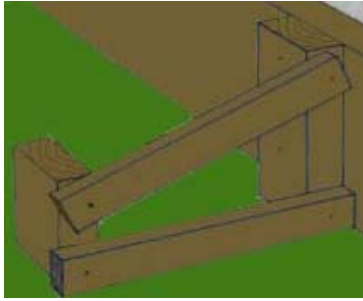
The first thing is to stake out the outline of your shed. I normally use eight stakes, one at each corner and one in the middle of each side. It is important that your dimensions are correct. Once you have your four corners staked off and insure that the dimensions are right, you can run a strong string around your layout. You can use a simple string level to insure that your forms will be level. For each section of forms, nail three 16 inch 2"x4"

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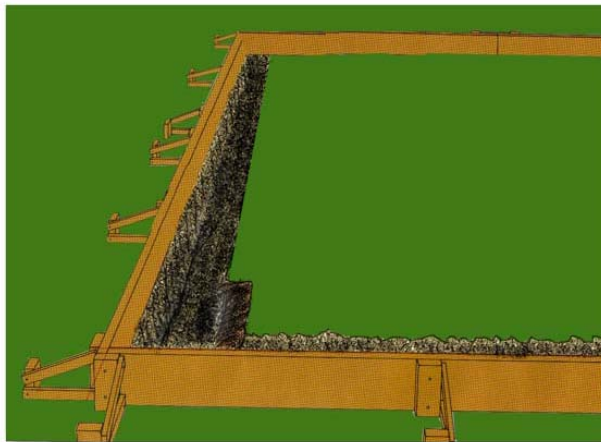
stakes to an 8' length of 2"x4" making sure the top of the stakes are level with the top of each form board. Set the interface of the forms along the strings lines and drive the stakes into the ground until the top of each form is level with the line.

Make sure there are no gaps between the bottom of you forms and the ground where the concrete can seep out. Where two forms come together, nail a section of plywood across where the two boards butt together. This will prevent the concrete from being forced out of this crack between the ends of the forms. Brace the forms boards,



This is the time to double and triple checks your dimensions. If your measures are off, it is not easy to tear up a slab and start over. If you find after you pour your slab your measures are off, don't panic. You can just change the size of your building to match you slab. The only different between an amateur and a professional, is the professional has made so many mistakes, they have finally learned how to cover them up.

Along the interface of each form board dig a trench 12" wide and as deep are required for footing in your area. Bevel 5 inches from the inner edges so that the concrete slopes down into the trench and doesn't just have a straight drop off into it.



***** This would be the time to put your reinforcing bars in the trench if you are going to use them****

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Spread a 3-inch layer of clean 1 inch gravel over the main part of the building site, but don't let any gravel fall into the trench. The bed of rock under the slab keeps the concrete dry and permits it to shift without cracking with weather changes. Cover the gravel with sheets of 4-mil polyethylene. Over these sheets lay down 6x6-10/10 wire mesh extended almost to the form boards.

Now, you are ready for the concrete. It is very, very important that once you start pouring it you finish the whole slab before it settles or starts to dry. So once you start, fill the area to the top of your form boards, take a 2x4 and use it to help compact the concrete down into the trench. Level the surface with a screen made of 2x4. You can also just use a 2x4 longer than the width of your form, with a person on each end. Work it back and forth as you move it forward to level the concrete with the top of your forms. Then smooth the concrete with a Darby or Trowel.

This is the time that if you know anyone who has worked with concrete to have them over for lunch. Laughs. People cause most problems with concrete at this stage, by over working it.

Also at this time, put your 1/2" x 12", J shaped anchor bolts in place. Making sure they are straight and you don't have one placed where a door or a wall stud will be. Also make sure they stick up enough above your forms to get your sole plate on and have room for the washer and nut. I use a plastic lid from a large coffee can to hold the bolt up and in place until the concrete sets enough to remove it. Just drill a hole in it, put your J anchor with washer and nut in place and a small block of 2"x4" and let the lid sit on the top of the concrete and the edge of the plastic lid on the form. Once the concrete sets up enough to hold the bolt, I remove the plastic lid.

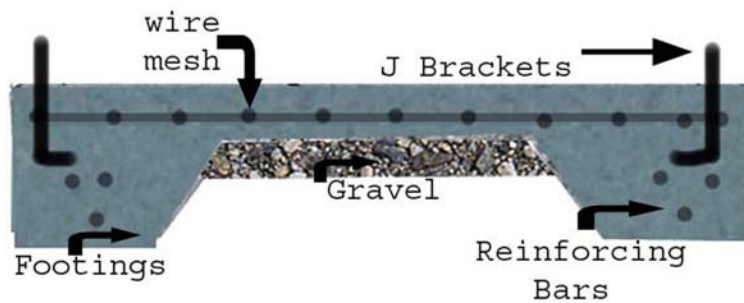
You can use your sole plates to do the same thing. Drill all your holes in the four sole plates for your walls. Put each sole plate in place along the edge of your concrete. Since I like to build the wall as one unit and then put them in place I don't use this method. It can be hard to get your sole plate back up from the concrete once it settles. Your other choice is just leave the sole plate there and build your wall with the top plate and studs. Move this unit on top of your sole plate on the concrete and toe nail the bottom of your studs in place.

When the concrete is hard enough to walk on but still damp, use a power trowel on it if you desire to have it smooth. Sprinkle it with water, cover it with sheets of polyethylene and let it cure for 3 days or more before you remove the forms.

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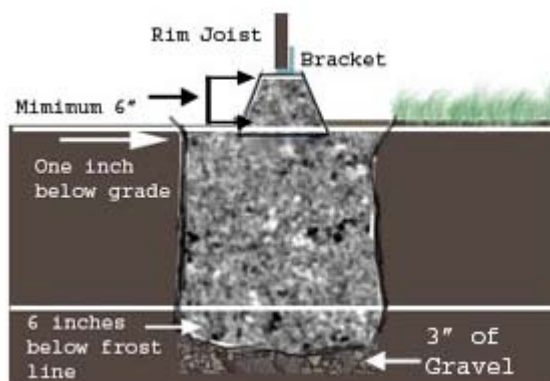
Here is a side view of what you are trying to accomplish.

PIER BLOCK FOUNDATION:

If you are working with uneven ground, local code requires footing but you want a wooden floor or maybe you just want a more simple way to make a foundation for you shed, then pre-cast pier blocks are the way to go. There are many sizes and styles to choose from. I would suggest one with a metal anchor strap or post anchor.

The footings are easy to do.

Dig your hole to the depth and size to meet local code requirements. Fill the hole within one inch from the top of grade. Wait a few minutes for the concrete to settle enough to support the weight of the pier blocks. Soak the pier block with water, then position the blocks in the center of your hole and level them in both directions. Line the anchor strap up with your string. Fill in around the base of the pier block with dirt to prevent the concrete from drying out too quickly. It is suggested that you place one on each corner and one center between the two corners on each side of the building. Some plans will call for blocks down the middle.



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CONCRETE BLOCKS WITH NO FOOTINGS:

If you don't need footings, then you can go with standard concrete blocks. I like to use a small slab type block that is common at most concrete or lumber dealers. They distribute the weight of the building over a larger area and if you need to shift the building, you will have more area for the rim joist without moving the blocks. The most common size is 12"x16". Use one or two at each location to get the building high enough off the ground.



THE FLOOR:

This section is for those who have decided to go with a wooden floor.

You will find the dimensions and detailed drawings on the Floor Layout page of your plans. Some of the plans will call for pressure treated 4"x4" for rim joists, otherwise we used double 2"x4" or double 2"x6" for rim joists.

Some of the plans will call for a lag bolt and shield that will be used to anchor the ends of the rim joist together. It is the same as a bolt and nut.

You drill a hole for the shield in the end of one of the 4" pressure treated lumber and a hole through the other one for the lag bolt. When you screw the lag bolt through one 4"x4" into the pre drilled hole that you have placed the shield in, as the lag bolt goes in, it will force the shield to spread and anchor the two together.

This will help insure the bottom of the shed doesn't spread apart if the ground starts to settle under it.



Follow the diagram on your Floor Layout to determine which rim joist goes inside of the other one. Nail the rim joist in place using 16 d nails. You should use joist hangers to put your cross members in place. ****Now is the time to double check that your outside rim joists are square*****. Measure diagonally from a far corner to the opposite corner. Then do the other two corners. The measurements should be exactly the same.

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NOTE: I am a firm believer in using metal ties. They are cheap, quick and easy to use. They will also prevent you splitting the wood by driving nails in at an angle.

RIDGE BEAM SYSTEM: Cut and tack in place the two end rafters. Use a string and some kind of weight attached to make sure they are center of the building. Put your ridge beam in place and allow for the correct over hang on the ends. Some plans call for you to notch the end of the ridge beam to make the top lookout.



NOTE: A lookout is just a board that extends pass the edges of the building to make the over hang or eave. Your plans may call for them to be placed from the outside edge of the building; other plans may call for them to be anchored back to one of the roof rafters.

Once you have the two end rafters and the ridge beam in place, then put the up right end studs in place to support the end rafters. Insure your end rafters are plumb. Then put the other rafters in place. I do two on each side at a time. This is to straighten any bow that may be in the ridge beam and to insure I don't force a bow in it. Even if your plans don't call for them, I suggest you place cross braces across each set of rafters. This will just be a 2"x4" board, place about 18 inches down from the inside peak of the building and nailed from one rafter to the opposite rafter. One of the biggest concerns in roof design is that you build it in such a way, that the weight of snow or the weight of the roof doesn't push the outside walls apart. These cross braces will greatly improve the strength of your roof system.



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ROOF SHEETING:

This is a pretty simple part. It is best if you can get someone to assist you with it. The pitch on most of my plans is 8/12. That is pretty steep. It will help dump snow and water off faster. This will also add a lot of additional overhead storage.

If you have not put your lookouts in place yet, now is the time.

The most important part is not to line up the ends of the plywood on the same rafters. To avoid this you will normally have to cut some sheets in half. There should be at least two rafters between where the ends of two sheets meet and the ends of the sheets above or below them.



edge of your fascia boards.

Fascia: Some plans will call for a 2"x4", 1"x4" or a 1"x6" board. The fascia is a board nailed to the ends of your roof rafters and lookouts to close the ends off and provide some support. If your plans call for lookouts front and back, nail the fascia on them as well. Line the edge of your sheathing with the edge of your fascia board. When you install the drip edge it will go over the

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