HOME REPAIR RESOURCE CENTER

HOMEOWNER REPAIR GUIDE

CONCRETE FORMING

For do-it-yourself or contracted repairs

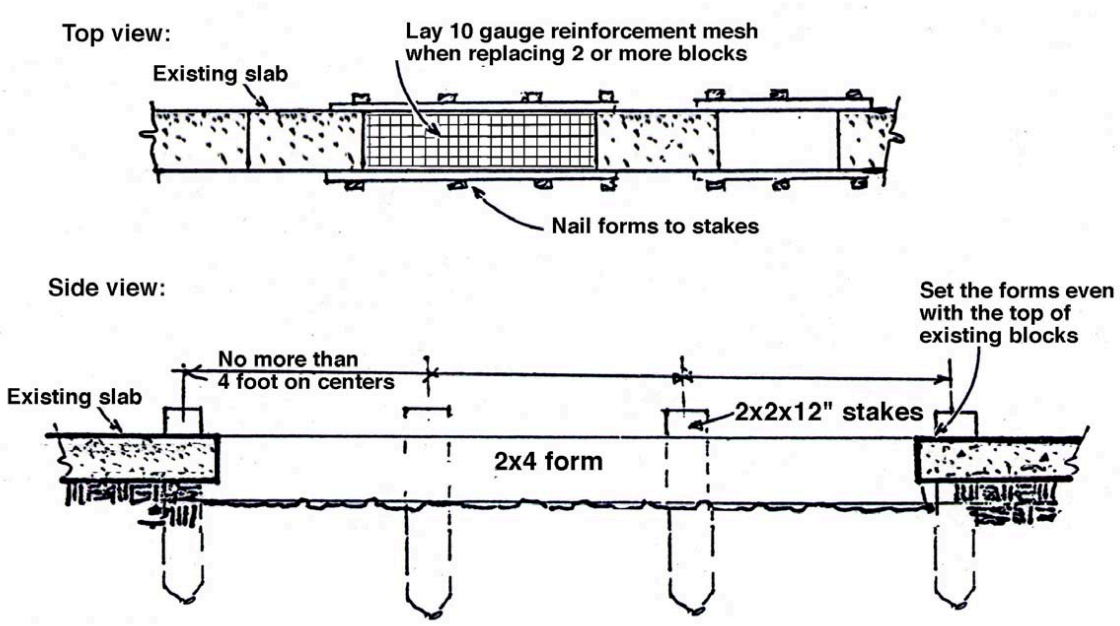
Building forms for replacement sidewalk blocks requires a few wooden stakes and *straight* wood 2 x 4's to contain the wet concrete until it hardens. The wood does not have to be new, but should be strong enough to support side pressure. Attach the form boards to 2 x 2 stakes about 12" long. The form will be easier to disassemble if you connect the wood with screws; if you use nails, however, leave the head protruding from the surface so it will be easy to pull them out later.

PREPARING THE SITE

After removing the damaged sidewalk blocks, dig out enough earth so that the new concrete will be the correct depth to meet code requirements. If the earth is not solid, dig out any loose soil and add a gravel bed 3 to 4 inches deep. (If the earth is solid and has a partial sand or gravel fill, you may not need to add more gravel.) Reinforcement mesh will be needed when more than one block is being replaced. The mesh will be laid onto the gravel bed before the pour.

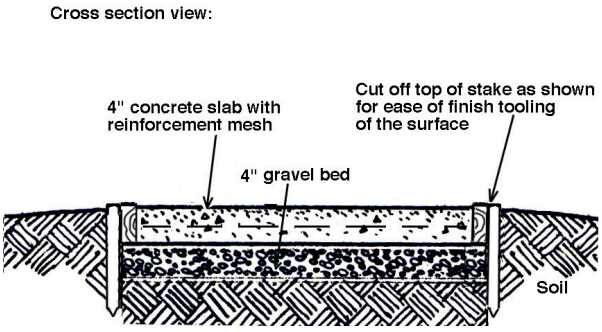
SETTING THE FORMS

After preparing the site, set the forms as follows (see illustrations):



Top view and side view of forms for a replacement sidewalk block

FORM ELEMENT	SPECIFICATION
Form boards	Straight 2 x 4's, nailed or screwed to the stakes
Stakes	2 x 2 x 12" stakes, no more than 4 feet on centers
Height	Set the forms even with the top of the existing blocks
Gravel bed	4" gravel bed where the earth is not solid
Concrete slab	4" concrete slab
Reinforcement	Lay 10 gauge reinforcement mesh when replacing 2 or more blocks



Cross section view

Cut off the stakes even with the top of the forms, for ease in finishing the wet concrete.

OTHER CONCRETE PROJECTS

Forming for other types of concrete installation (driveway aprons, patios, etc.) follows a similar process, but you should always check code requirements for the specific project. For example, in Cleveland Heights concrete apron blocks must be thicker than sidewalk blocks and require a curb footer to anchor the block at the street end. Check with your city's Building Department before you start.

PERMIT AND INSPECTION

Note that concrete replacement is a permit job. An inspector will have to approve the forms, so make sure you allow time for your preparation work to be checked *before* the concrete truck arrives for the pour.

After pouring, the concrete will need to cure for at least 24 hours before you can remove the forms, but you should leave them in place until after the final inspection.

HOME REPAIR RESOURCE CENTER

Home Repair Resource Center empowers homeowners to maintain their homes for sustainable and diverse communities.

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