UltraComposite
Sheet Piling and Piles

ShoreGuard
Synthetic Sheet Piling

Installation Guide

WARNING

No two walls are the same. The numerous job site variables make it impossible to provide specific construction designs without careful analysis of each variable and the effect it will have on the structure. This analysis should be left up to an architect, professional contractor, or engineer. This manual lists typical installation techniques for demonstration purposes only, and in no way represents any recommendations on how to approach your particular project. Please rely on your engineer for specific design recommendations. Because of the complexity of geotechnical loading calculations and the susceptibility to extreme change of soil loads with minor changes in local site conditions such as soil parameters, water levels, surcharge loads, etc., we strongly recommend the use of design professionals who are familiar with local wall construction to determine the required wall parameters, design techniques, and applicable installation methods and procedures.

WARNING

This manual does not address any safety or regulatory issues associated with its use nor the installation of CMI products. It is the user's responsibility to establish and ensure that all regulated and appropriate safety and health practices are followed. It is also the user's responsibility to ensure that any and all applicable permits and permissions have been secured before installation of any CMI product.

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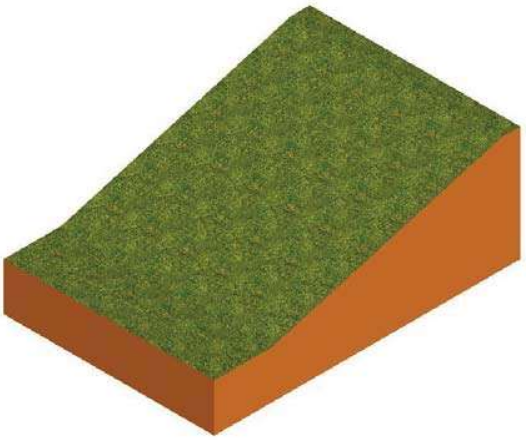
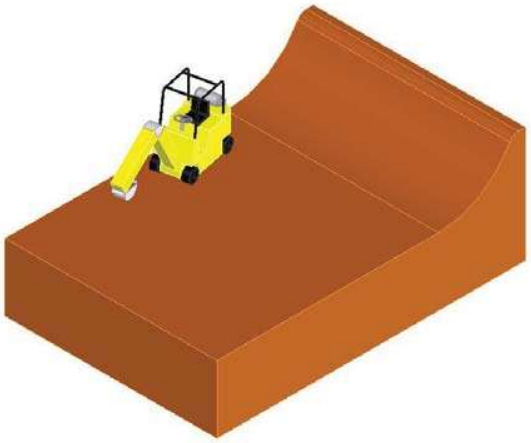
Before You Begin

Prepping the Site

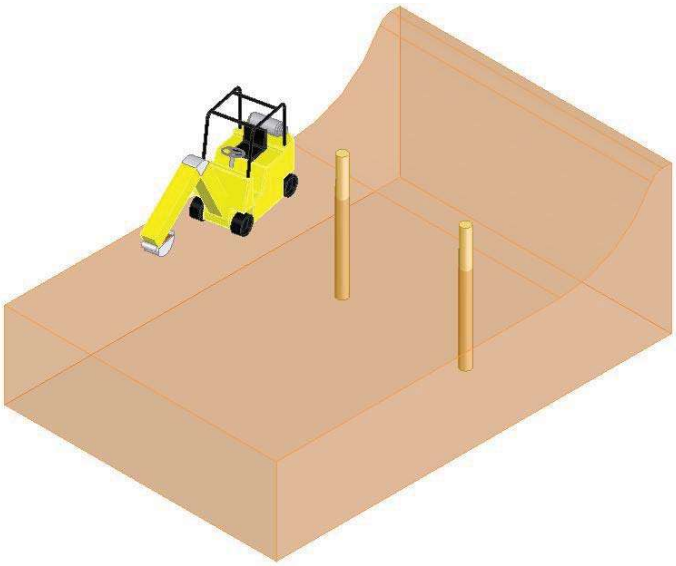
There are many types of sheet piling structures that serve many different purposes. We cannot hope to cover every situation here but rather, show some fundamental ideas. Most scenarios are going to involve some preparatory work before you begin the construction of your structure. Many situations require excavation. Whether it is to have more mobility in construction, for burying anchors, or ultimately changing the landscape, preparatory work will need to be done first. This might be a good time to more closely investigate the soil and its properties to ensure that your wall has been properly designed. A simple, anchored, earth retaining wall situation is shown here for illustration purposes.



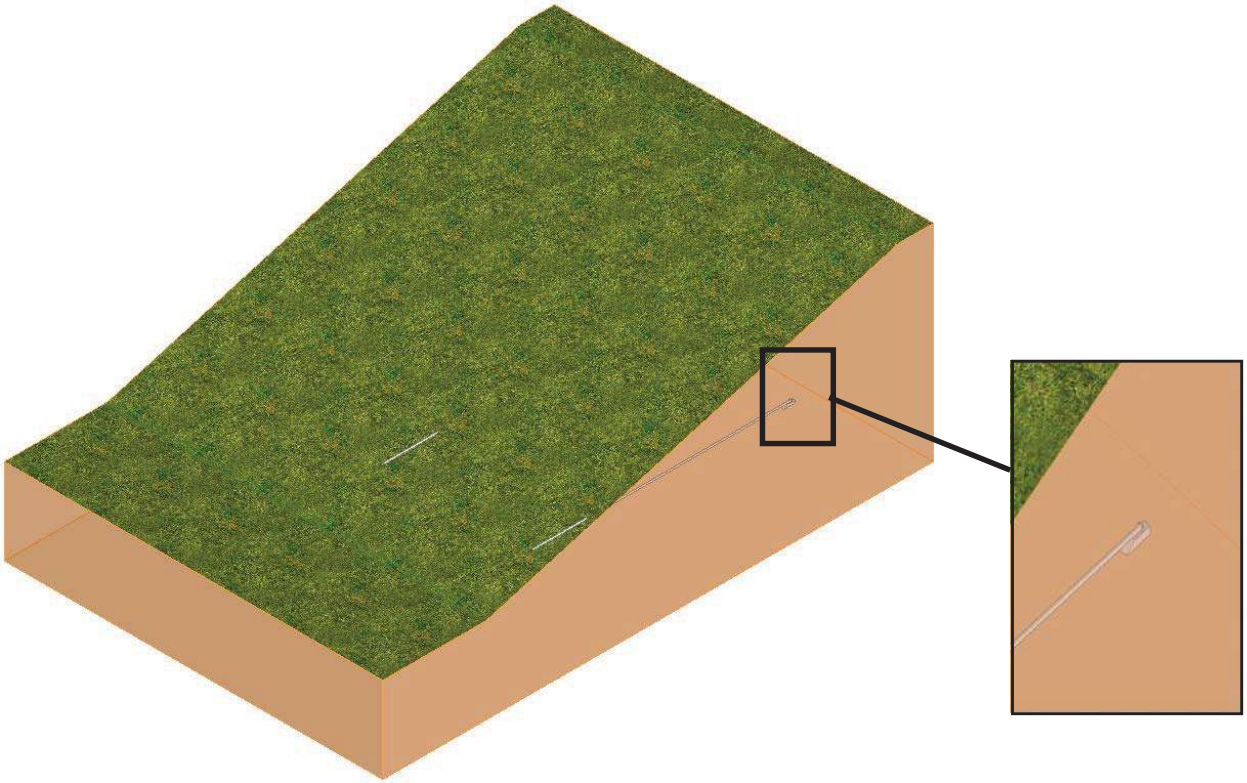


Anchoring

If you will be anchoring your wall, there are many types of anchors to choose from. The most popular anchoring method involves driving or burying large bodies in the ground with which to secure your wall. This method involves excavation which may not be possible or feasible in every situation. Different people use different materials and different layouts to achieve their preferred anchoring system. Shown here are TimberGuard poles used as anchor piles. It is important that, whatever anchor system you use, the anchor be buried outside of the slip plane or active wedge of the soil. This is the angle that the dirt settles to, naturally, if left unsupported. It is this falling of the dirt that you are trying to counteract with a retaining wall. The wall designer should designate the distance and depth that your anchors should be, in relation to the wall. Make sure to plan so that you have access to the anchor for attachment to your wall when nearing completion.

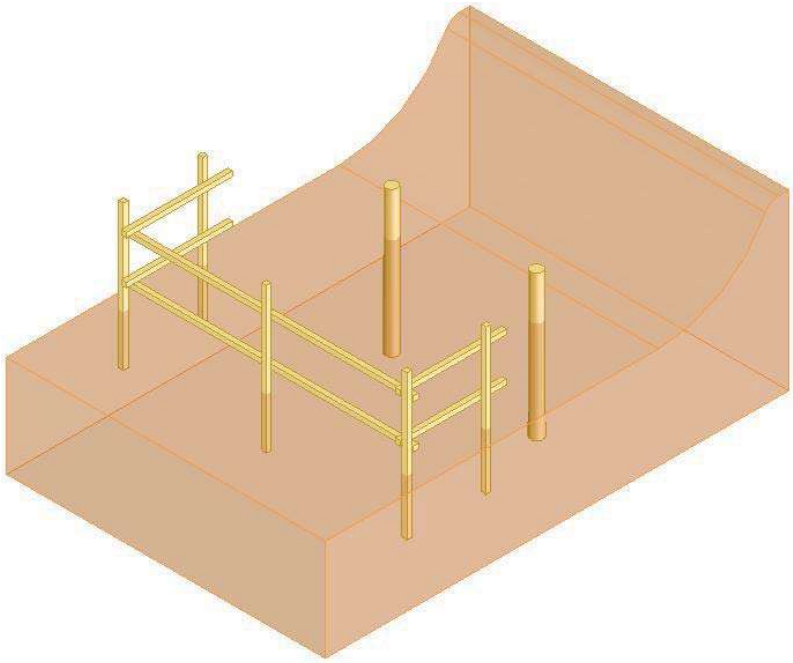


In cases where excavation is undesirable, there are other types of anchors that can be driven or screwed into the ground, leaving the exposed topside virtually undisturbed. The type pictured below has a mechanism that extends when sufficient pressure is applied to the rod, securely holding itself in place. These types of anchors can also have load checking devices, to ensure that they are installed with a firm footing.



Building a Driving Guide

A temporary driving guide is highly recommended for building a straight wall. By assembling a driving guide before you begin installation, you establish an accurate wall position and provide a surface to drive against that keeps the sheet piling plumb. Construction should be fast and simple. There are many methods and techniques out there. For example: If you are re-facing a wall, then you may be able to use the structure you are replacing as your guide. You will need to find the method that best suits you and your situation. You may incorporate your wales and poles, if they are in your design, into your driving guide. This can save you a great deal of time and effort. If you decide to do this, you should construct your wale system as you would for final installation (see Wales). This will be the backbone of your finished wall. ShoreGuard, Gator Aluminum, UltraComposite and TimberGuard wales may be clamped or temporarily lagged to your posts. Use your wales as the horizontal members and poles as the vertical posts for your temporary driving guide. Ensure that an adequate number of posts are used so the guide does not move when you begin driving your sheets. Also, two points of contact for your sheet piling (as shown below) provide for more accurate driving than one alone. If you choose not to incorporate wales or poles into your driving guide, then the guide will need to be removed after the sheet piling is installed. However, if you construct your guide on the back side of your wall, you may be able to simply bury it after completion.

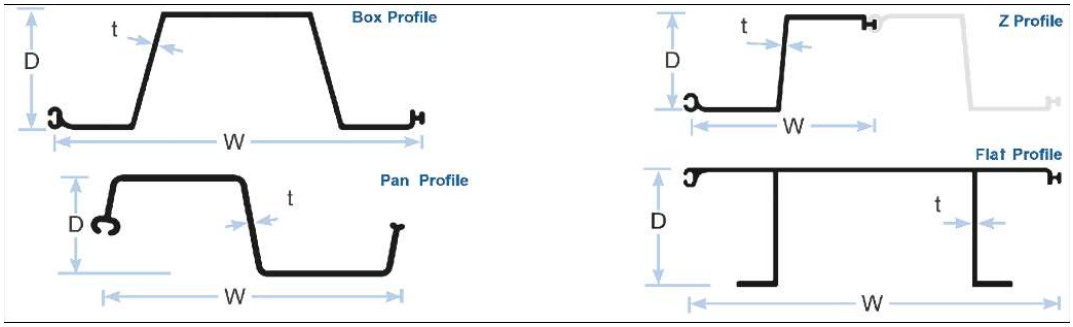


Now you are ready to begin installing your sheet piling.

Sheet Piling

Materials

We offer many different profiles of sheet piling in three different materials; vinyl, aluminum, and FRP Composite (fiber reinforced polymer composite). The many profiles offered fall into four basic categories; "Box", "Z", "Flat", and "Pan" profiles. These four basic shapes are shown here respectively.



Your application may also require corners. They are available for turning 90 degree angles with all products and 45 with most.

Equipping for the Job

Synthetic sheet piling does not require specialized driving equipment. It can be installed with conventional driving practices and equipment. Commonly used equipment for driving includes water jets, excavation equipment, drop hammers, vibratory hammers, and vibratory plate compactors. The equipment you use will need to be appropriate for the soil, site conditions, and the sheet piling that you will be using.

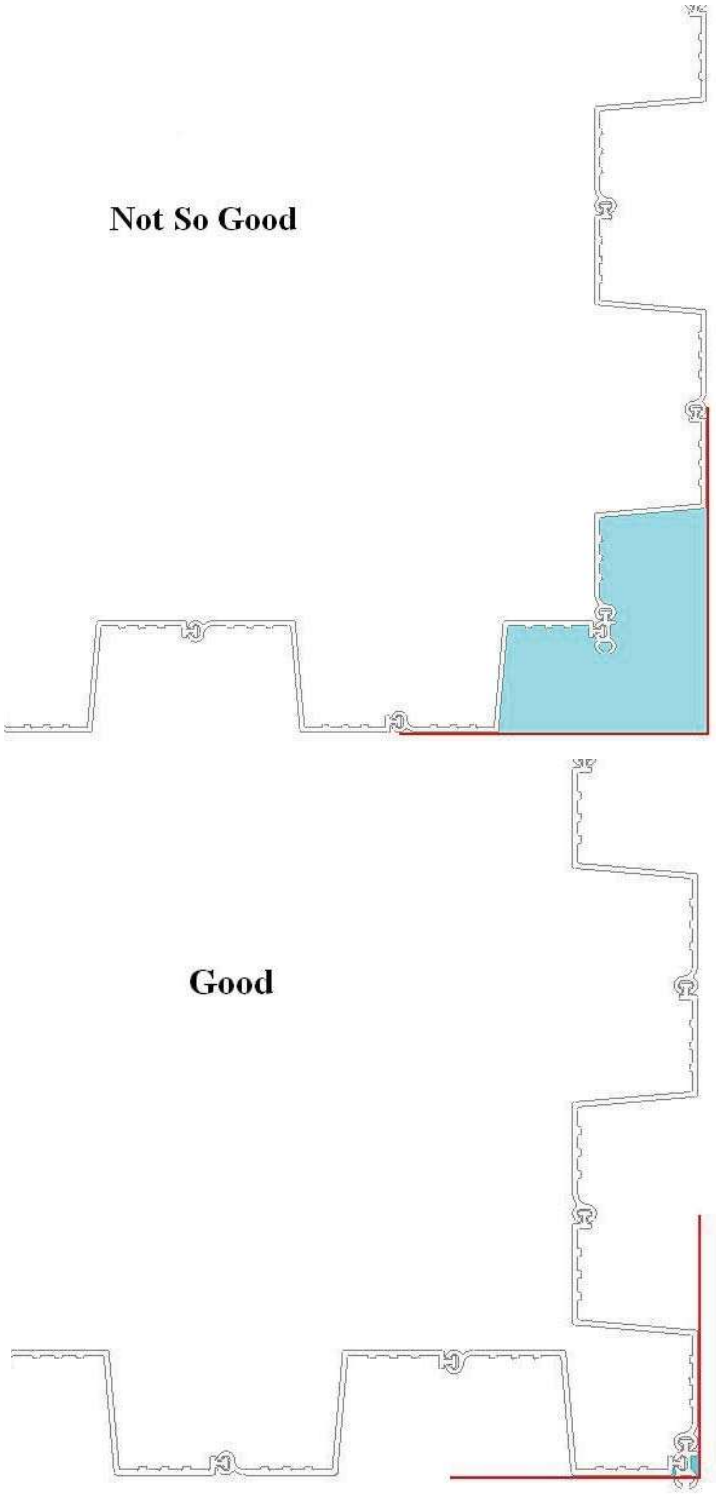
Installation

Sheet piling has been around for many years. There is no one correct installation method. Everyone has their own technique that works best for them. Here, we will cover the basic elements and tips for a successful installation.

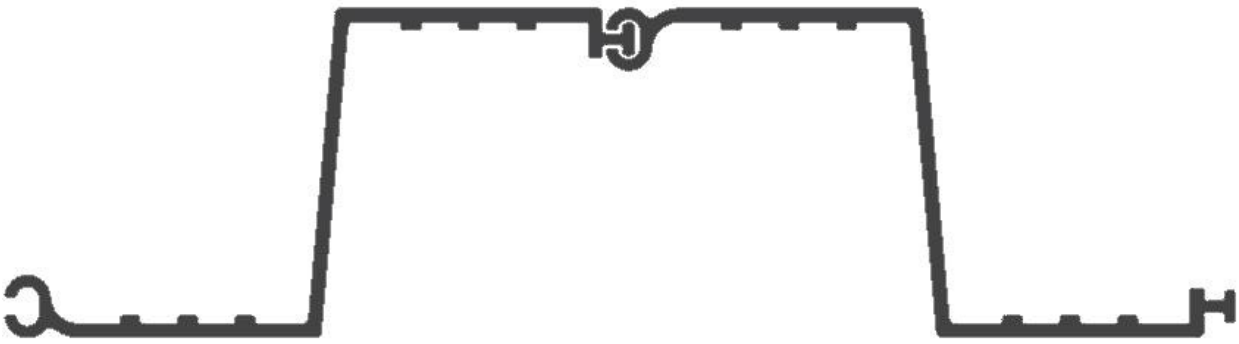
In order to achieve the full performance of your structure, your sheet piling must be driven to the depth specified by the wall designer. You may want to mark your desired driving depth on your sheet to ensure that it is sufficiently driven.

Some forethought needs to be given to the sheet orientation before you begin. First, the most popular way to drive is with the male lock leading; the rationale being that the female lock has a tendency to fill up with soil and hinder driving if used as the leading edge.

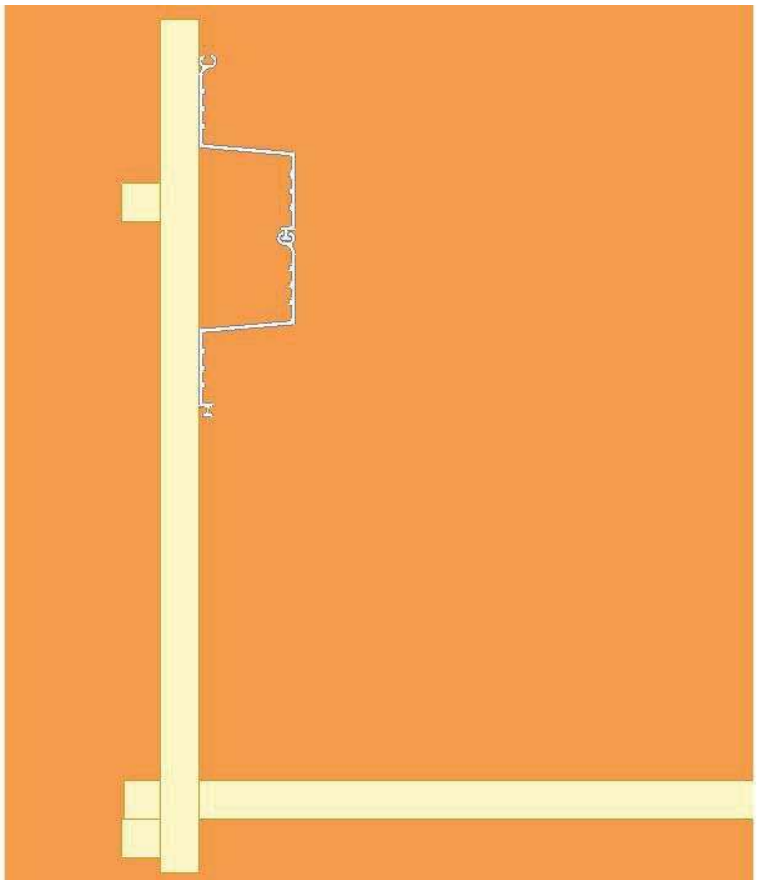
It is also a good idea to orient your sheets so that any outside corners are configured as shown in the drawing below whenever possible. Orienting your sheet piling in this way maximizes the strength of your wall in the corners, by eliminating as much of a void as possible between the sheet piling and the cap and/or wale, and reduces the induced stress on the corner joint. If you look closely at the corner, you will see that there is sometimes an attachment point in the corner piece for possible future additions to the wall. Additions will be possible with most series of synthetic sheet piling.



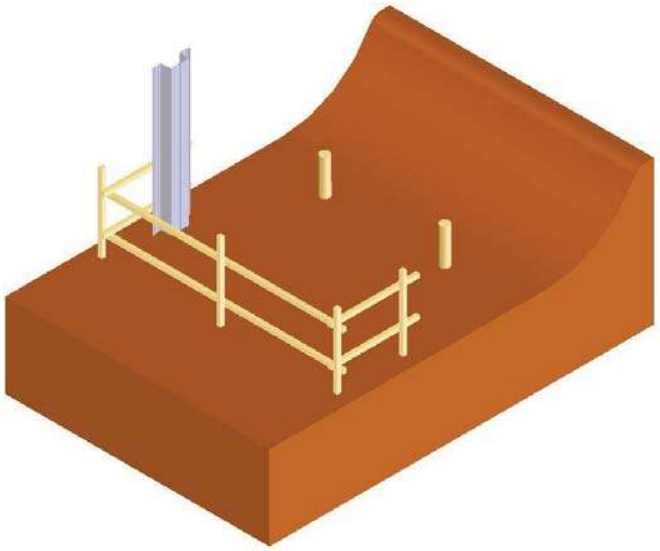
After you are satisfied that your sheet orientation is correct, you are ready to begin driving. You will want to drive your sheets as full box sections. If you have purchased a box section sheet, then you are ready to go. If you have Z section sheets, then you will want to pair them before driving.

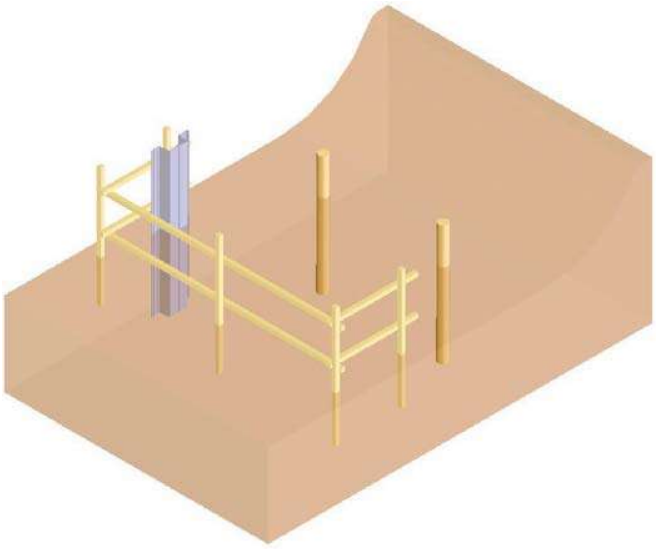


Place your first sheet or pair of sheets on your driving guide and make sure they are in the proper location and orientation for driving. Again, sheet piling installation varies from person to person. The starting location is up to you. It is important, however, to drive your first section plumb, because it will act as a vertical guide for the following sheets.

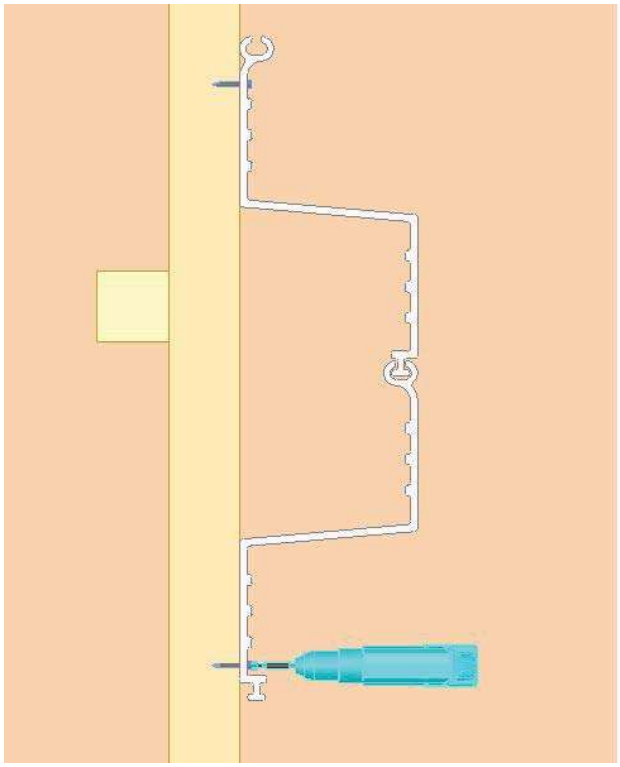


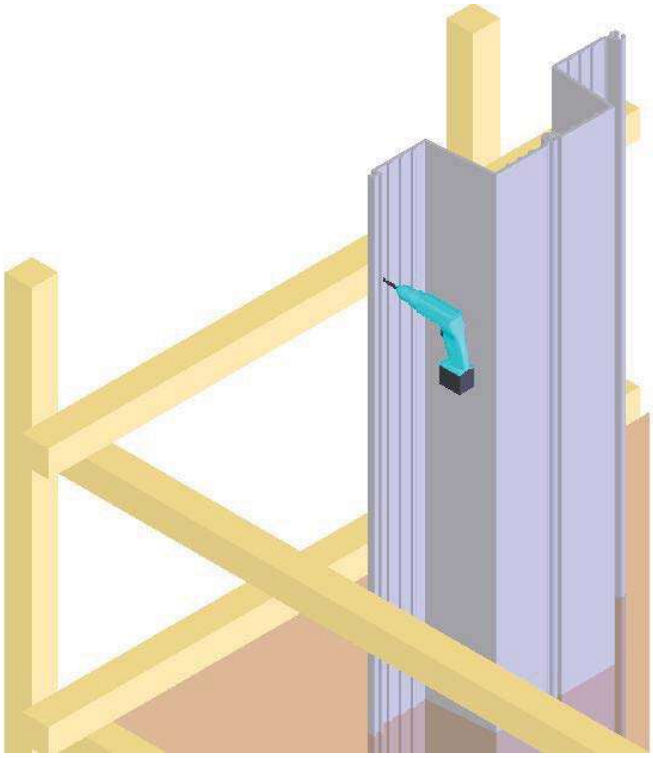
Drive your sheet to the specified depth.



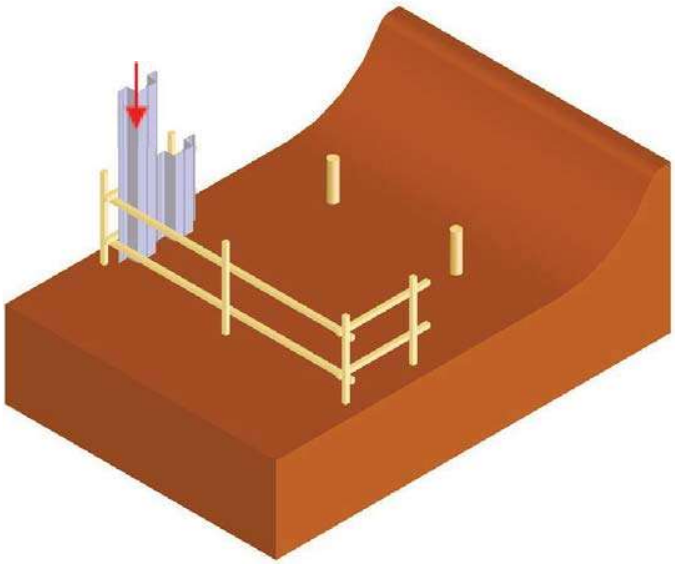


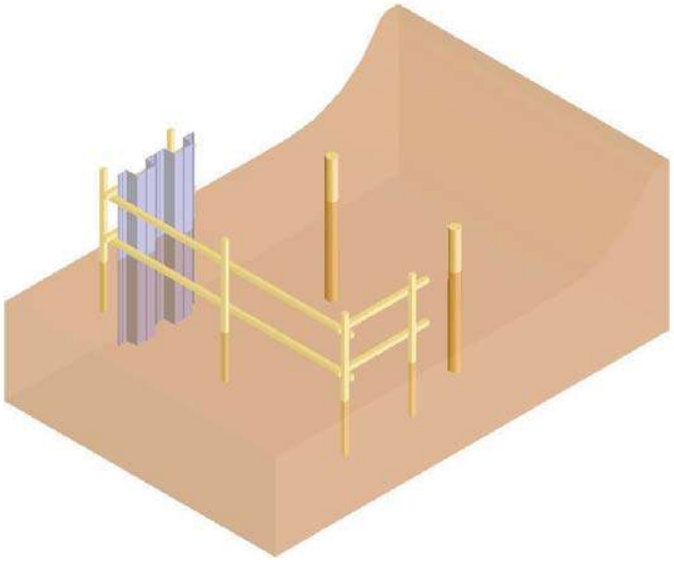
Whether or not your guide includes wales, it is a good idea to lag each sheet to the driving guide after you are satisfied with its position. Lagging your sheets as you go will ensure that your driven sheets will remain plumb as you continue to drive, as well as prevent them from being overdriven as you drive subsequent sheets. If your situation has allowed you to incorporate wales into your guide, then you will be lagging the sheet piling to the wale, eliminating a future step.





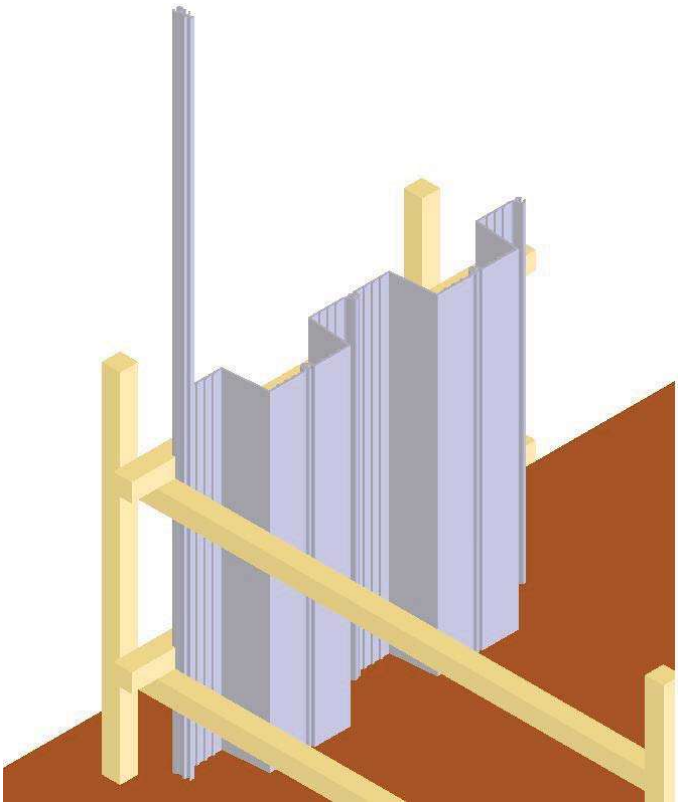
Continue this process for the first straight run of your wall. There should be enough play in the locks and flexibility in the sheets to ensure that each sheet can install in the proper position.

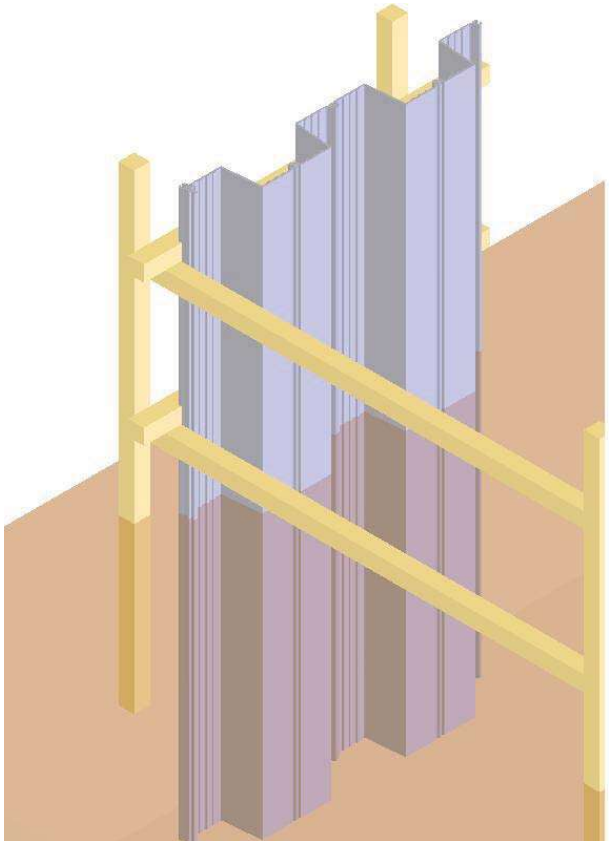




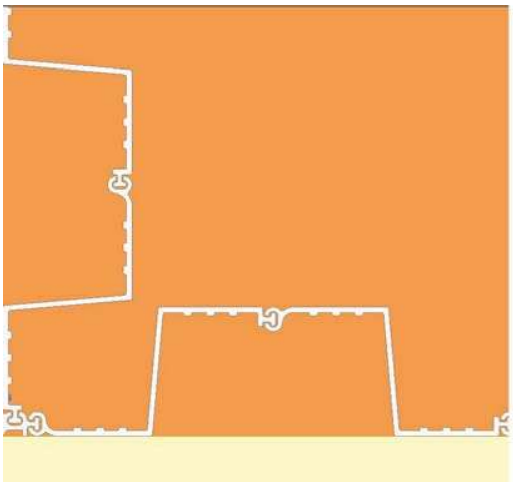
Turning a Standard Corner

Corner pieces are available for any sheet piling that you might purchase. These pieces come in 90 degree angles, and in most cases, include 45 degree bends as well. Drive these just as you would sheet piling. Alternatively you can thread your corner piece on the leading lock of the last sheet to be driven and drive the sheet and the corner piece together.

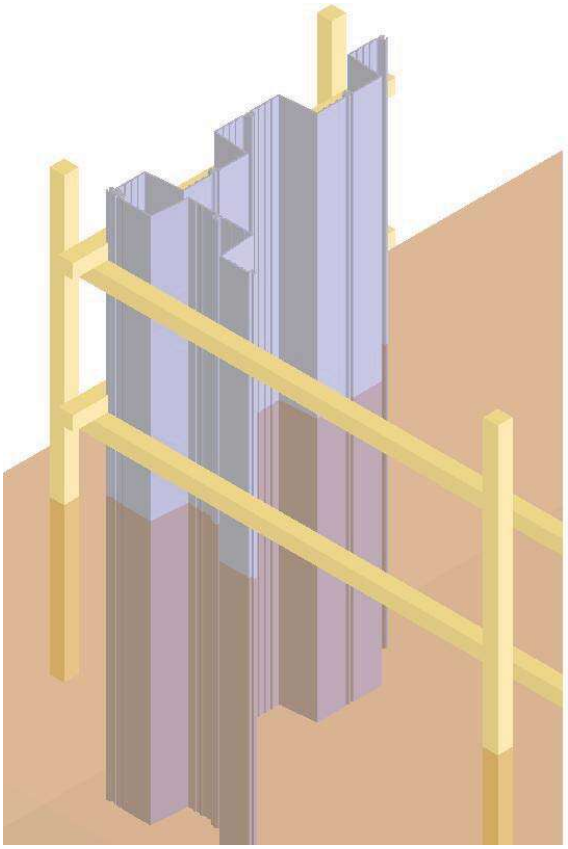




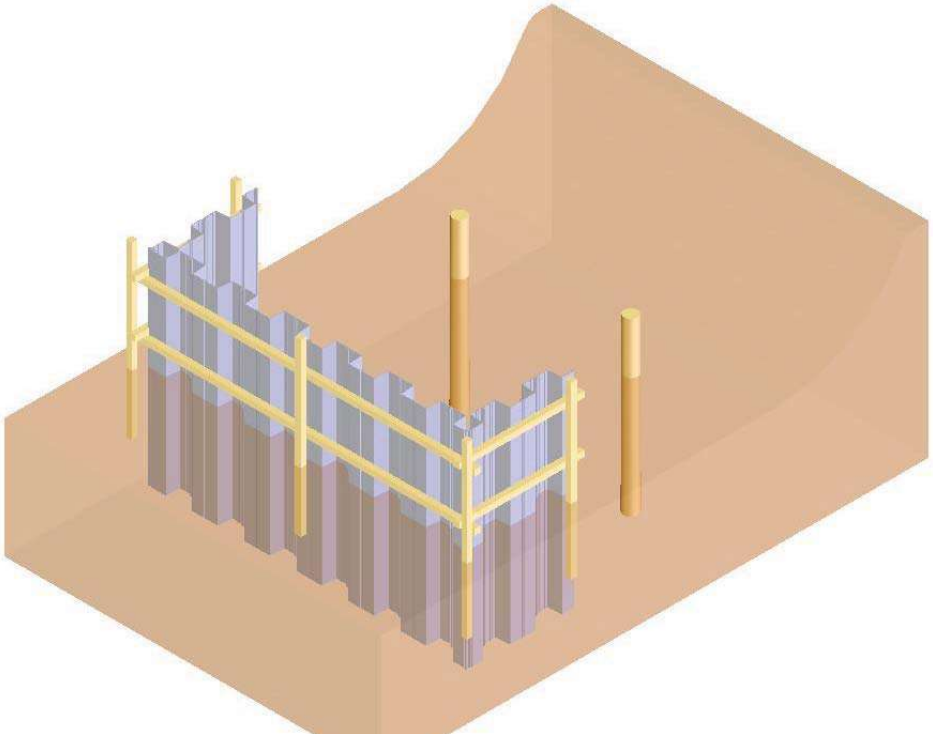
After you are satisfied that your corner is in position, drive your next box section, lining it up, using the corner's male lock and your driving guide.



After you are satisfied that this sheet is properly positioned, secure the sheet to your guide.

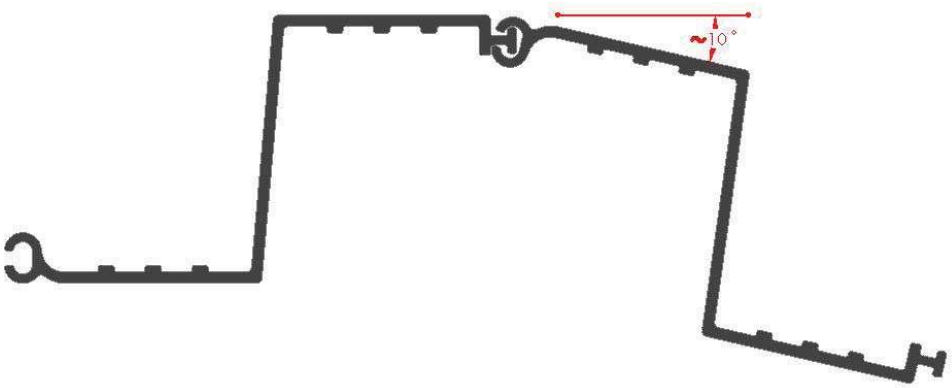


Repeat the steps learned in this section to complete your wall.

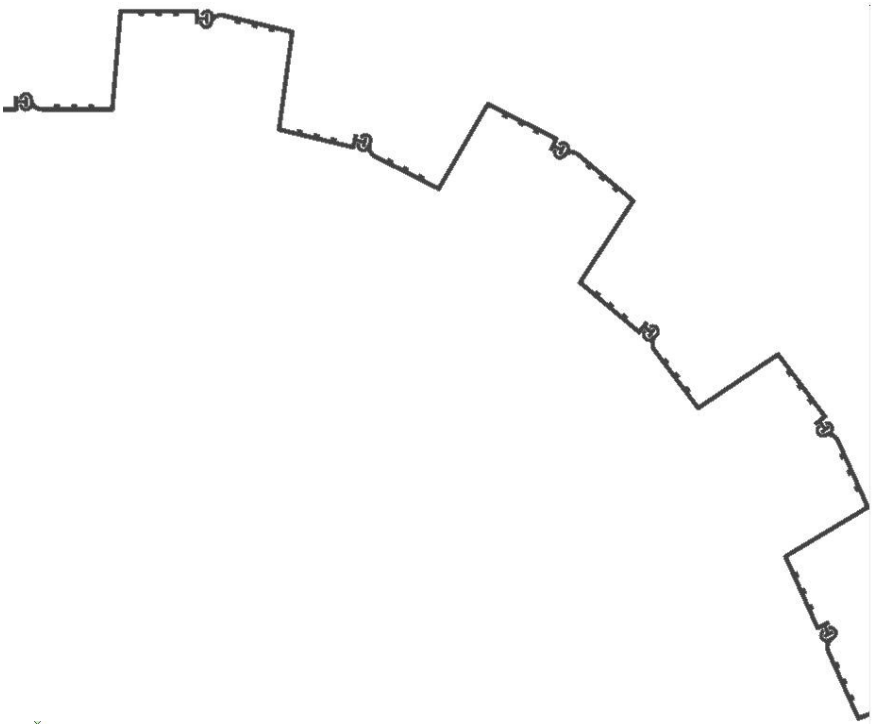


Making a Non-Standard Turn

If you need to make a gradual curve or turn an angle that your particular corner piece does not allow, you can do so by curving the sheets. The tolerance in the locks allows for turns of up to approximately 10º per interlock. (This angle may be greater or smaller, depending on the particular sheet used.)



This will allow you to customize your curves and angles when constructing your wall.



Preparing for the next step

Depending on your situation, you will probably need to dismantle your driving guide to some degree. If you incorporated your wales into the guide, then you will only need to remove the posts. If you constructed it with wales and poles, or if it is on the back side and will be buried, then you are already prepared to move on to the next step.