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Dig Defence Animal Control Commercial Barrier (DDAC) Test Results

Skunks and other animals can dig 1' down, 1' across and 1' back up to get under a structure. Because of this, DDAC was made 15" tall with 1 ¼" gaps, allowing single depth installs to protect many situations with protection above ground, too. Prototype testing started right before pups were born in Oklahoma, 2010. Since that timeframe, it has been successfully used on opossums, skunks, raccoons, groundhogs, armadillos, beaver, foxes, feral hogs, cats, large rats, porcupines and coyotes. With feral hogs going under fences it should be installed on a very slight angle. Hogs are the only animals that were found to need a slight angle to keep them out. As of August 2011 over 5.5 pallets (250 4' units per pallet) have been installed. To date we have not had a dig-in or dig-out yet.

Is a hardware cloth buried installation one of the best solutions to keep digging animals out in many cases? *Yes.* Do you want to do only hardware cloth buries if another option is available? *No. Why not look at an alternative for some situations.* DDAC is an alternative, not a total replacement, for hardware cloth installations. Dig Defence installations can be done quickly and will keep out most aggressive digging animals. You still have to do hardware cloth buries and use rebar in some places due to obstructions and animals smaller than skunks, such as rats and snakes. Or for exclusions taller than the DDAC panels can protect, but for some applications DDAC can be the right fit. If a hardware cloth bury with standard ½" galvanized cloth lasts 15 plus years, DDAC will last quite a while longer. 4 gauge galvanized is thick and hardy. Unless it is standing in salt water, it should outlast us all. Short of a section being removed, nothing skunk size or larger will get past it in most situations.

Results from test offices, usage as of August 2011:

Skunks: most DDAC has been used to exclude skunks, before, after and during birthing season – from spot treatment to entire mobile homes and entire fence lines.

Groundhogs: 5 times. 2 of them had young

Armadillos: 30+ foundations, fences, trailers, sheds

Fox: 9 times, one of which they had 4 living areas on the same property, twice with young

Coyote: 3 times. 1 dirt den, 2 fences

Large rats: 6 times on foundations

Porcupine: 2 times



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Extreme testing

- At 3 different properties, testing was done with bait food and skunk lure placed under a shed after skunks were 1way'd out without re-entry in a sandy loam soil 3 times.
- At 3 different properties, testing was done with bait food and skunk lure placed under a shed before skunks were 1way'd out of without re-entry in a sandy loam soil 3 times. Skunks were allowed to eat free food for 1 week prior to eviction.
- Testing was done with fermented corn and an automatic feeder with non-diesel fuel-coated corn inside 3 T-posted hog panels in a wet sandy loam. DDAC was installed on each side, straight down/not on an angle. Once 2 sounders of 50+ hogs started eating for 1 week, the 4th panel was installed, making a square. No hog dig ins, only animals fitting *through* and climbing *over* the hog panels such as raccoon, opossum and skunks. A second row of DDAC was installed 4" overlapping the units driven 12" into the ground with essential oil drips of glycerin with anise and banana added to the equation on a T-post in the center. Skunk activity totally halted after digging almost all the way around 6" down, climb-overs only.
- On a section of chain link fence with hogs digging under for a well-worn path, DDAC driven straight down was pulled out by hogs. When driven in on a slight angle towards the hogs, no re-entry occurred.
- Testing on steep hillsides with extreme erosion next to overpasses is now all growing grass.
- Prototype units with less than a 1" gap were difficult to drive into the ground.
- Prototype units with cheaper 4 gauge galvanized steel or less than 4 gauge steel bent.
- Prototype units taller than 15" add drastically to shipping cost.
- Prototype units with a 1 1/2" gap did not keep out skunks. 1 1/4" worked most effectively.
- Prototype units without the second top bar bent.
- Installing without the DDAC tool made it a slower process with a wavy, dented look to the install.

Protecting Against Aggressive Digging Animals and Larger Holes

If you have an area with a lot of erosion or a deck higher than 3" off of the ground or animals such as coyotes, foxes, groundhogs, porcupines or armadillos that are digging farther down than the 15" that the Dig Defence® Animal Control model normally protects, simply double up, placing one deeper and another higher up at normal depth. Don't leave a space between the two. This creates a barrier up to 30" deep. Even when DDAC is doubled, it is still a lot less money and work than a typical hardware cloth bury.

In regards to rough-pour slabs, edges of drives, A/C pads and sidewalks which are great entry points for animals such as skunks to get under when there is erosion. In those cases, use large chisels and hammers to make the slab as straight as you can, cut the units into smaller pieces to conform as good as it can and in some places, drive it in at a bit of an angle inward or outward. Bending DDAC and driving it in is not easy to do, so cutting it to width and manually going around corners is mandatory. Of course, try to address the erosion, too - gutters, downspout extensions, back-fill... but, of course not all clients do it.

On railroad tie landscaping exclusions, drill a hole into the tie for one prong to be affixed to the tie before driving it in. On culverts and large drains that encounter ice, use electrical conduit staples or pipe driven into the ground to allow for better re-alignment when it is removed for ice or debris clean-out; for larger culverts/tin horns, tack-weld 2 units together height-wise. Erosion control test plots in different soil types are all growing grass and weeds and the erosion has stopped almost completely.

Dig Defence Animal Control Commercial barrier is just another tool now available to you address a variety of exclusion situations. When the situation fits, DDAC can save you time and money to provide a cost effective exclusion barrier solution.