

- Wire Gauge Information -

Wire gauge: a series of standard sizes used in describing the diameter of wire.

To make wire used in wire fence and mesh, single strands of large diameter wire called rod are "drawn" through a series of increasingly smaller dies or plates and reduced to a specific gauge/diameter. The gauge is determined by the wire's final use - single strand wire, welded wire mesh or woven wire fence. Heating of the wire is not required in the drawing process.

There have been several different gauge designations since this process was introduced. Numbers have been used to designate wire diameter since 1735. They originally referred to the number of draws used in the process. The first draw was called 1 gauge, the second 2 gauge, the third 3 gauge, on down to the final draw of the thinnest wire being made. This is why thick wires have a lower gauge number than thin wires. 9 gauge wire is thicker than 14 gauge because it requires fewer "draws" than 14 gauge.

In 1855, Brown and Sharpe established a formula-based progression of 39 steps - from 1 gauge through 40 gauge. This is now known as the American Wire Gauge and is used extensively in the United States.

The following values show in inches the most common gauges of wires used in welded and woven wire mesh and fence:

 8.5 gauge 0.155 inch 9 gauge 0.148 inch 10.5 gauge 0.128 inch 11 gauge 0.120 inch 12.5 gauge 0.099 inch
14 gauge 0.080 inch
16 gauge 0.062 inch
18 gauge 0.047 inch
20 gauge 0.034 inch
21 gauge 0.031 inch
23 gauge 0.025 inch
27 gauge 0.017 inch
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9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
Approximate sizes of wire (not to scale).