

DO I NEED A BUILDING PERMIT FOR A RETAINING WALL OR FENCE?

This checklist is intended as an aid to guide you in determining whether or not you need a permit for a proposed project that may include retaining walls and/or fences.

When do I need a permit for a retaining wall?

- When the height of the proposed retaining wall is greater than the horizontal distance of an adjacent building or structure (i.e., if the retaining wall fell over and could damage an adjacent building or structure).¹
- Any height of retaining wall built adjacent to and supporting a load from a building. This is commonly referred to as a surcharge.¹

When do I need a permit for a fence?

- When the fence is greater than seven feet in height (eight feet for open chain link or woven wire fences) from finished grade to the top of the fence.
- When a fence is required for a pool enclosure.

How do I apply for a permit?

- See our information flowchart for how to obtain a building permit.

Please consider the following when making accommodations for the construction of any retaining wall or fence:

- Setbacks for fences and retaining walls or a combination thereof are required to be entirely on the property where the permit for the installation is being permitted.
- If you live on a corner lot or a curved lot, the City of Beaverton Development Code has provisions for vision clearance of roadways that are required to be maintained. For information regarding these requirements, please see attached vision clearance handout, and contact our Planning Division at (503) 526-2420.
- There are requirements for building retaining walls and/or fences adjacent to or within easements and right-of-ways. Most fences and/or retaining walls are not allowed in any easements and/or right-of-ways. For easement and right-of-way information, please contact our Site Development Division at (503) 526-2552.
- There are special setback requirements in the front yards of buildings and near driveways and alleys that need to be observed. For information on these requirements, please contact our Planning Division at (503) 526-2420.
- Drainage piping placed behind your retaining wall will need to terminate to an approved location and will require a plumbing permit. For plumbing permit information, call our plumbing inspection section at (503) 350-4079.
- When landscaping around your house, be sure to maintain grades that provide a positive drainage away from and around the foundation. Current code application is six inches of fall within ten feet of the foundation.

¹ Requires the attention of a design professional.

Even if a retaining wall or fence does not require a permit, the above bulleted items are regulated by code and become the responsibility of the owner to verify compliance with state and city codes.

When do I need a design professional to design my project?

- A design professional may need to provide a design for any project requiring a permit.
- A design professional is a licensed architect or engineer registered to practice in the state of Oregon.
- As noted by the footnotes indicated in this handout. If you still have a question, please call our residential plans examiner as noted below.

If you are considering backfilling or excavating over 50 cubic yards of fill dirt, gravel, etc., call our Site Development Division at (503) 526-2552 regarding permits and City Code requirements.

For questions regarding information in this handout, please call our Building Division at (503) 526-2493, and ask for our residential plans examiner.

**For additional information, see our website at:
<http://www.beavertonoregon.gov/index.aspx?NID=176>.**