
Development Services Department
Building Safety Division

BUILDING CODE DIRECTIVE #2

SUBJECT: FENCES AND FREE STANDING WALLS

A. Zoning Ordinance Requirements:

- 1) The maximum height of any freestanding wall or fence in a required front yard setback shall be four (4) feet, including single-family residential yards.

In the areas behind the required front yard setback and within the required rear and side yards, the maximum height of such walls shall be ten (10) feet, except where a taller wall is necessary to screen service areas under Section 4-707(G) of the Zoning and Development Code.

All fences and walls shall be subject to city review and approval through development plan review, or by approval of the Development Services Manager or designee.

- 2) The height of walls and fences shall be measured from the highest adjacent grade within twenty (20) feet, except when the wall or fence is adjacent to a street right-of-way which has a higher grade. For such situations, the height of the fence or wall shall be measured from the top of the curb or top of crown of road where no curb exists.

B. Building Code Requirements:

- 1) For permitting consideration, the height of walls and fences shall be measured from the lowest point of elevation of the finished surface of the ground, paving or sidewalk within five (5) feet of the wall or fence.
- 2) No permit or inspection is required for fences and freestanding walls six (6) feet or less in height. **Note: Masonry walls may have up to ½ of their last course height extending over the (6) foot height measurement. Therefore, masonry walls may be a maximum of 6'5" in height, when constructed of (10) ten inch high fence block, before permits are required.**
- 3) Fences and free standing walls over six (6) feet in height shall be classified as a Group U occupancy and shall comply with the structural requirements of the Building Code. Open fences (i.e. chain link, wrought iron, etc.) shall be designed in accordance with the same requirements as solid fences with an appropriate factor for percent of openness.

Over →

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Page 2

(a) Wind Design:

1. Walls or fences twelve (12) feet or less in height shall be designed to withstand a 14.8 PSF horizontal pressure upon the gross area.
2. Walls or fences fifteen (15) feet or less but greater than twelve (12) feet shall be designed to withstand a 18.7 PSF horizontal pressure upon the gross area.

(b) Seismic Design:

1. Design shall be based on $Z = 0.075$ criteria.
2. C_p for masonry and concrete fences shall be 0.75 with direction of force-applied normal to the flat surface of the wall.

(c) Engineering drawings and calculations shall be submitted to the Development Services Department with an application for the building permit, site plan, and plan check fee.