



## Retaining Walls

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No retaining wall construction shall take place, other than typical minor landscaping, until the owner has applied for and the Department of Community Development has reviewed and approved an application for a retaining wall permit. Retaining walls exceeding 16 inches in height may be constructed only upon issuance of an Administrative Use Approval Permit. Retaining walls may be reviewed and approved with a Building Permit, in which case a separate Use Approval Permit would not be required.

- Retaining walls 16 inches or less in height are considered curbs and are not regulated by this section.
- Stepped retaining walls that do not exceed an overall gradient of three feet horizontal to one foot vertical are exempt.

### Application Requirements

1. **Survey** of property drawn to scale, showing all existing structures and proposed retaining wall.
2. A **grading plan** meeting the requirements of §275-55 that shows the existing and proposed grades and all retaining walls shall be submitted. A **grading and erosion control permit** is also required.
  - a. A retaining wall plan detailing the location, size, type and proposed grades on both sides of the retaining wall, together with a detailed cross section of the retaining wall, a description of the material to be used, and a description of the method of construction to be utilized shall be required. The plan shall also show the proposed use of land on both sides of the retaining wall.

### Guidelines

1. Height.
  - a. Retaining walls should not exceed 48 inches in height unless designed by a professional engineer or installed according to manufacturer's specifications. Walls that are not tiered and exceed seven feet in height shall require a professional structural engineer on site overseeing the construction of the retaining wall.
  - b. Adequate safety features and precautions shall be incorporated into the retaining wall design to mitigate the hazard of the abrupt dropoff created by the wall.
2. Setbacks.
  - a. Retaining walls shall not be located closer than five feet to a side or rear lot line unless the Director finds that there is no other practical location, and only after written approval by the affected neighbor is received.
  - b. All retaining wall structures, including tiebacks, are to be located outside the base setback line.