



RESIDENTIAL FENCES

MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 15.435

This handout provides basic information for building a fence on your property; it answers the most common questions about the city requirements and allowances. Please contact the Planning Division with any questions or concerns you may have.

Do I need any permits to build a fence?

A building permit is required for fences taller than six (6) feet.

How tall can my fence be?

Any fence in the front yard of the lot shall be limited to four (4) feet in height. This limit shall also apply to side yard fences within the first twenty (20) feet from the front property line.

Fences along the rest of the side property lines and along rear property lines shall be limited to six (6) feet in height.

Can a fence be placed on a property line?

Yes, a fence may be placed on a property line. However, a fence may not extend into a neighbor's property or into the public right-of-way. Consider discussing your plans with the adjacent property owner(s) to avoid potential concerns or disputes regarding placement.

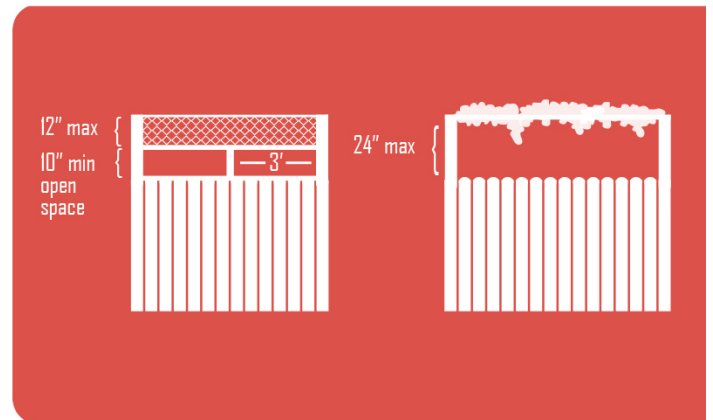
Where else can my fence be located?

Fences may be located anywhere on your property, with the exception of sensitive lands such as wetlands, steep slopes, streams, etc.

Example – Front Yard Height



Example – Height Exception



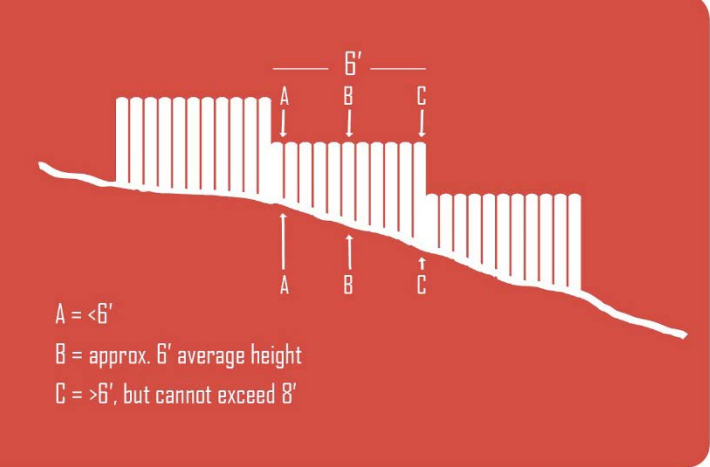
What are the exceptions to fence height limits?

1. Fences constructed of plastic or metal with clear visibility may be six (6) feet tall in front yards and eight (8) feet tall in side yards. Please see SMC 15.435.200 for full details.
2. Architectural features (such as trellises and lattice panels) may be added to the top of a permitted fence as long as they meet the following standards:
 - Does not exceed twelve (12) inches in height and there is at least ten (10) inches of open space above the top of the fence;
 - Supports for the feature are spaced no closer than three (3) feet on center; and
 - The overall height of the fence does not exceed eight (8) feet in side yards and six (6) feet in front yards.
3. Residential properties fronting a principal arterial/highway may have fences a maximum of six (6) feet. Certain design requirements apply. Please contact Staff for further information.

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Example – Fence Height Measurement



How is fence height measured?

Height is measured from existing or finished grade, whichever is the lowest.

When a front yard fence is to be built along a sloping grade the maximum four (4) foot height may be averaged in stepped segments. However, under no circumstance shall the fence exceed six (6) feet above finished grade.

When a side or rear yard fence is to be built along a sloping grade, the maximum six (6) foot height may be averaged in stepped segments. However, under no circumstance shall the fence exceed eight (8) feet above finished grade.

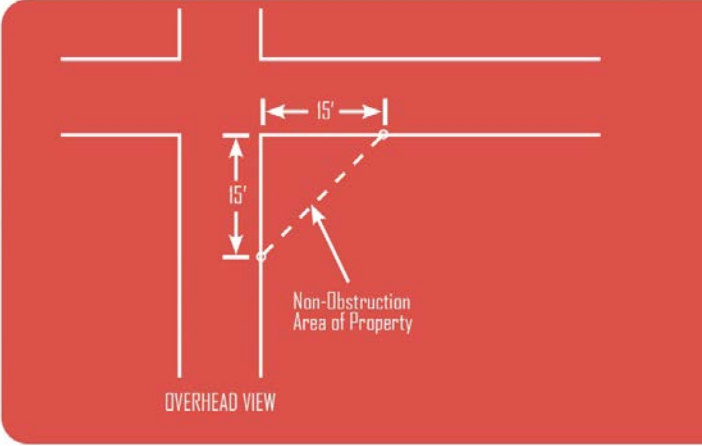
Does the City have property line information pertaining to my property?

The City does not have legal documentation pertaining to the location of private property lines. The most legal and accurate way to determine lines between private properties is to have a survey conducted of your property.

Do sight distance requirements apply?

Yes. Sight distance provisions shall apply at all intersections and site access points. A sight distance triangle as determined by SMC 15.400.350(B) shall contain no fencing 3 1/2 feet and above the existing street grade.

Example – Sight Distance



What material can I use for a fence?

All materials are allowed except for razor and barbed-wire.

This document is intended to provide guidance in applying certain Zoning Code regulations and is for informational use only. It shall not be used as a substitute for the Zoning Code or for other city codes.

Where can I get additional information?

- Municipal Code Chapter 15.435
- Visit us online at www.seatacwa.gov
- Call the permit center at 206.973.4750



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