

Residential Fences — Frequently Asked Questions

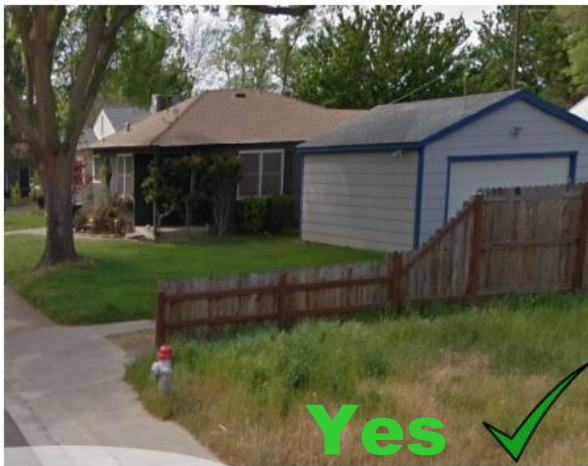
1. Do I need a permit to build a fence?

A wooden fence six feet tall or less generally does not require a permit; however there are requirements for fences located along front property lines or near street intersections (corner lots) and driveways. The requirements are explained below for fences along front property lines (see #2), and near street intersections and driveways (see #3).

2. What are the requirements for fences located at the front of my property?

Fences located within the front yard setback (typically 20 feet from the front property line) cannot exceed three feet in height (See Figure 1). This also includes fences located on side property lines which extend into the front yard setback area. If you are unsure of the front setback for your property, please confirm with the Planning Division (925.671.3152 or zoning@cityofconcord.org).

Figure 1:



(Fence height drops to 3 feet in the front setback area)



(The fence is located within the front setback area and is also above 3 feet in height)

3. What are the regulations for fences located on corner lots?

A. Determining Front vs. Corner Side Property Lines:

Corner lots have unique fence requirements. The first step to determine the requirements for a corner lot is to identify the “front” versus “corner side” property line. [Section 18.20.030](#) defines the *front property line* on corner lots as the shortest side fronting a public street. As a result, the other (longer) frontage on corner lots is the *corner side property line*. Note that your front property line may be on a different side than where your driveway, garage, front door, or street address is located.

B. Fence Requirements:

Fences along the corner side property line have the same regulations as those on the side or rear property line (see #1), and are allowed to be up to six (6) feet in height, except when located within the “sight visibility triangle” (see “C” below) near intersections and driveway entrances, where they cannot exceed three (3) feet in height.

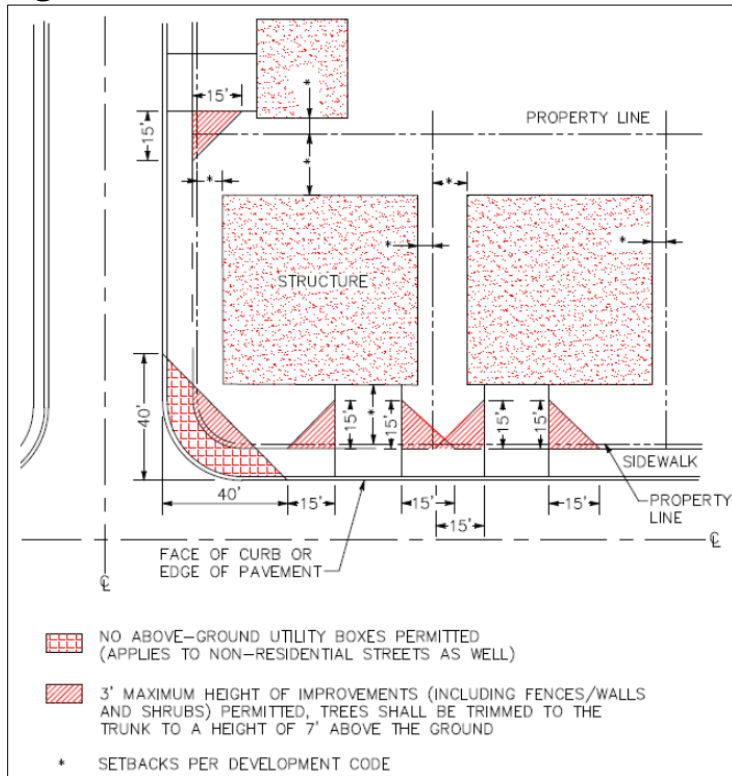
C. Sight Visibility Triangles:

Corners/Intersections. The corner visibility triangle is an area between the intersection of two streets and the corner of an adjacent property. It is measured along the property frontage at the curb line (or edge of pavement lines) for a distance of 40 feet along both lines from their intersection. The visibility triangle is the area between the street and the line formed by connecting the outer points of each line. (See Figure 2 below, on the following page).

Driveways. The driveway visibility triangle is located on either side of the area where a driveway meets the property line (this also applies to driveways on adjacent properties). It is determined by measuring 15 feet along the property line, away from the driveway, beginning at the intersection of the driveway with the property line; and measuring 15 feet along the driveway, beginning at the intersection of the driveway and the front property line. The triangular area formed by connecting the outer points of each line across the intervening property is the visibility triangle. (See Figure 2 below, on the following page).

Note: If your property is located along a street with a speed limit of 35 miles per hour or more (or other unique circumstance) there may be additional sight visibility considerations, so please contact the Planning Division.

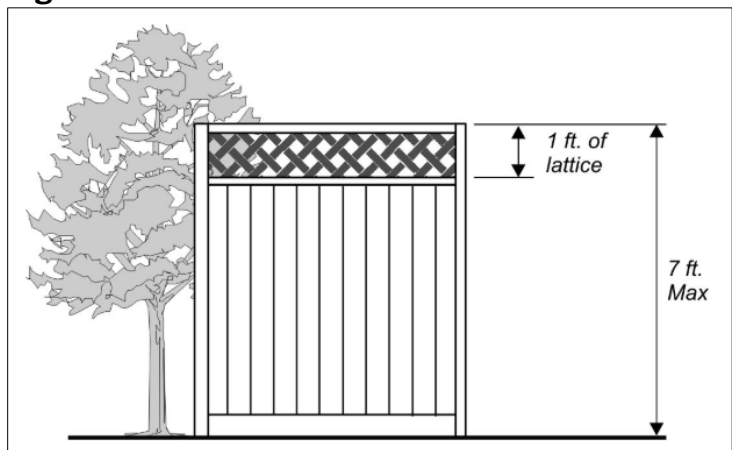
Figure 2



4. Can I build a fence taller than 6 feet in height along my side or rear property line?

Fences with one (1) foot of lattice at the top are allowable up to seven (7) feet in height along the side and rear property lines without a permit or special approval (see Figure 3). Additional landscaping to improve screening and privacy is preferred over tall fencing, however, in certain circumstances a fence (or wall) may be increased in height from six feet up to eight feet with approval of a [Minor Exception application](#). Contact the Planning Division regarding the Minor Exception application, criteria, process, and costs.

Figure 3



5. Are there similar exceptions for fences located along the front property line?

A fence in the front setback cannot be increased above three feet in height through the Minor Exception process (see #4). However, decorative entry features such as an arbor, trellis or archway are allowed in the front setback if less than ten (10) feet in height by ten (10) feet in width. Contact the Planning Division regarding these structures.

6. What materials can I use for my fence?

Other fence types and materials, besides wood fencing, can be allowed but may require a building permit. Contact the Planning Division or Building Division (925.671.3107 or building@cityofconcord.org) with questions.

There are four prohibited fence types/materials:

- Barbed wire, razor, or concertina wire
- Electrified fences
- Chain link fencing (when visible from public areas, public rights-of-way, and/or private roadways)
- Temporary fencing such as plastic or wire mesh fencing, barricades, and panel-system fences. (Except for construction sites, city-sponsored events, and temporary uses approved under CDC 18.200.200, Temporary uses and structures.)

7. How is fence height measured?

Fence height is measured from the lowest point (unmodified grade at the base of the fence) to the highest point of the fence (top of the structure). When the grade on one side of the fence differs from the other side, the measurement is taken from the lowest natural grade.

8. What are the requirement for fences located on or near retaining walls?

When fences are located on top of a retaining wall (or within two feet of a retaining wall), the combined height of the fence and wall must meet the same height requirements as fences described in the questions and answers listed above. The combined height of the fence and wall is measured from the lowest point (unmodified grade at the base of the retaining wall) to the highest point of the fence.

9. How do I find my property line to make sure my fence does not encroach into a neighboring property?

Although a property line survey is not necessary for fences that do not require a City permit or approval, it is the only method for accurately locating property lines. The City does not maintain survey records for private property, and cannot tell you the exact location of your property line. Parcel maps with property line dimensions are available

online from the Contra Costa County Assessor's office and can be used to estimate locations on your property. See the following link:

<https://ccmap.cccounty.us>

10. Does the City have rules to address issues regarding shared/good neighbor fences?

Issues regarding shared fences such as their location, maintenance, and replacement are a private matter between property owners. Exceptions may apply for fences that were required by the City as a condition to approving a residential development.

If you still have questions:

Section [18.150.040](#) of the Concord Development Code contains regulations concerning fences and walls. Contact the Planning Division at (925) 671-3152 regarding information related to this handout and the Building Division at (925) 671-3107 for more information about building permit requirements for fences.

Figure 4: Example Fences in Compliance with Regulations (Interior Lot)

