



## **FENCES and WALLS CODE COMPLIANCE GUIDELINES**

### ALL DISTRICTS:

- A. Fences and walls must be maintained in a structurally sound condition and in good repair. Fences must be free from loose or rotting materials and must have braces and supports attached or fastened in accordance with common building practices. Exposed concrete block, tires, scrap metal, sheet metal, plastic/fiberglass sheeting, vinyl siding or fabric, plywood, pallet material, junk or other discarded items are not allowed as fence or wall materials.
- B. Fences, walls, and retaining walls are allowed in all yards, except as provided for in Sec. 201-1.9 (Buffer Setbacks) requiring fences, walls, and retaining walls to be located at least 5 feet from any buffer required by Sec. 207-2.1.B (Buffer Requirements).
- C. Fences, walls, and retaining walls in a front yard or side (street) yard must be placed within 2 feet of the vertical plane of any lot line unless a greater distance is required in Sec. 201-1.8 (Intersection Visibility) as follows:
  1. By a diagonal line connecting two points located on intersecting lines of the street right-of-way, each point being 20 feet from the intersecting lines.
  2. By a diagonal line connecting two points located on intersecting street right-of-way, alley easement, or alley edge lines, each point being 15 feet from the intersecting lines.
  3. Within these triangles, there may be no sight obscuring fence and/or wall higher than 30 inches above grade. Vertical measurements are made at the top of the curb on the street or alley adjacent to the nearest side of the triangle or if no curb exists, from the edge of the nearest traveled way.
- D. Retaining walls are subject to additional code compliance guidelines (see Retaining Walls Code Compliance Guidelines).

RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS: This section applies to all fences and walls except temporary fences and walls associated with permitted land disturbing activities in accordance with Sec. 103-3, permitted building activities in accordance with Sec. 103-4, or temporary tree protection in accordance with Sec. 207-4 (Tree Ordinance).

- A. Height: No wall or fence may exceed 4 feet in height within the front yard, except that any gate or gatepost within the wall or fence may not exceed 6 feet in height [see Fencing Examples].
- B. No wall or fence may exceed 8 feet in height within a side or rear yard [see Fencing Examples].
- C. Height Exceptions: The height standards in paragraphs A and B (above) do not apply in the following cases as follows:
  1. A fence, wall or hedge that encloses an approved stormwater management facility may be a maximum of 6 feet in height.

RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS (height exceptions continued):

2. A fence or wall enclosing a tennis court may be a maximum of 12 feet in height.
3. City Council may condition the approval of a rezoning or special use permit to require that walls or fences of a height in excess of these regulations must be placed in any yard where such a wall or fence is necessary to provide screening.
4. A fence or wall on a corner lot, located in the front yard, where the side of the principal dwelling is also located in the front yard may be a maximum of 8 feet in height [see Fencing Examples].
5. A fence or wall on a corner, located in the side (street) yard, may be a maximum of 8 feet in height when it set back from the right-of-way at least 50% of the required side (street) setback [see Fence Example B].
6. Through lots that require a no-access landscape strip per Sec. 207-3.2.B may have a fence up to 8 feet in height adjacent to the no-access landscape strip.
7. Screening required by Sec. 207-2.2

D. Fence Material:

1. No wall or fence made of woven wire or metal fabric (chain link, hog wire, barbed wire) may extend into a front or side (street) yard, except fences enclosing stormwater facilities may be vinyl coated chain link. Woven wire or metal fabric fences may extend into a front yard when on lots 3 acres or larger. Razor wire is not allowed.
2. Any wall or fence which extends into the front yard or side (street) yard on lots under 3 acres must be ornamental or decorative and may be constructed of brick, stone, wood, true hard coat stucco, wrought iron or split rail; provided that no wall or fence must be constructed of exposed concrete block, tires, junk or other discarded materials.

E. Subdivision Entrance Features: Walls, fences, or hedges incorporated into a subdivision entrance feature may not exceed 10 feet in height and are subject to review and approval by the Director after the submission of a landscape plan, site plan, and architectural review.

F. No structures including fences and walls are allowed in a drainage easement unless written permission from the City's Public Works Department is given. Drainage easements are indicated on Final Plats of subdivisions that are kept on file in the City's Department of Planning and Development or the Deeds & Plats Office of the Clerk of Superior Court, Gwinnett County (Lawrenceville). Fences and walls are not allowed in the drain field of any on-site sewage management system (septic system).

G. Permit Requirement: No building permit is required for fences that do not exceed 8 feet in height. A building permit is required for walls that are greater than 4 feet in height, measured from the top of footing. A building permit is also required for retaining walls less than 4 feet in height when the slope of backfill materials exceeds a 1 foot rise in 3 feet length (1:3) or when the wall will be required to support a surcharge load.

NONRESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS: This paragraph applies to all fences and walls, except temporary fences and walls associated with permitted land disturbing activities in accordance with Sec. 103-3, and permitted building activities in accordance with Sec. 103-4, and temporary tree protection fences in accordance with Sec. 207-4 (Tree Ordinance).

A. Height: No fence or wall may exceed the building height allowed in the zoning district or the roof level of the principal building, whichever is less.

NONRESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS (continued):

- B. Fences in Landscape Strips: Walls and fences are only allowed in the side (interior) yard and rear yard landscape strips when they are installed to satisfy the use standards of Chapter 200. Article 6 (Use Provisions) or Sec. 207-2.2.H (Other Screening Requirements). Walls and fences are not allowed in front yard or side (street) yard landscape strips, nor within 5 feet of any right-of-way (not including an alley).
- C. Fences in Front or Side (Street) Yards: Fences are only allowed in front or side (street) yards, but not within a required landscape strip, when they conform to the following:
1. The fence must be constructed as a wrought iron-style fence with brick or stacked stone columns (max. 30 feet on-center).
  2. The fence may not exceed 5 feet in height, except that column or gatepost within the fence may not exceed 6 feet in height.
  3. The fence must be adjacent to a required landscape strip or adjacent to an additional landscape strip at least 5 feet deep in depth. The additional landscape strip must be continuous and placed between the fence and the front or side (street) lot line, as applicable.
  4. The Director may waive this requirement as an administrative variance when the use standards of Chapter 200 Article 6 (Use Provisions) or Sec. 207-2.2.H (Other Screening Requirements) require an alternative fence or wall standard.
- D. Fence Material: All fences, except those subject to the fence-type clause above, must conform to the following:
1. Fences must be constructed of high-quality materials including one or a combination of the following: wood; wrought iron; composite fencing, PVC; aluminum; metal; or any material allowed in clause 2 below for walls.
  2. Walls must be constructed of high-quality materials including one or a combination of the following: decorative blocks; brick; stone; cast-stone; split-faced block; true hard coat stucco over standard concrete masonry blocks; and glass block.
  3. Wire and woven metal are not allowed unless it is chain link located in a rear or side (interior) yard.
  4. Barbed wire and razor wire are not allowed unless located in a rear or side (interior) yard in the HSB or LM district.
- E. Retaining walls must be made of finished poured concrete and must be faced with stone, brick or smooth true hard coat stucco (for properties located in the Towne Center Overlay District).
- F. Commercial uses located in the Towne Center Overlay District must conform to the following additional requirements:
1. No fixed fences/walls or retaining walls are allowed in front or side (street) yards unless an administrative variance is granted for topographic hardship, except for those surrounding authorized outdoor storage, or screening required by Sec. 207-2.2 (Screening).
  2. Movable fences/walls up to a maximum height 30 inches are allowed in front or side (street) yards surrounding outdoor dining, but may not occupy the required sidewalk.
- G. Permit Requirement: A building permit is required for the construction of any fence, wall, or retaining wall unless exempted by the Director of Planning and Development..