

CITY OF PORTLAND, TENNESSEE

Fence, Wall, and Hedge Requirements



Fences, Walls, and Hedges

Zoning Ordinance Requirements

Notwithstanding other provisions of this Ordinance, fences, walls, and hedges may be permitted in any required yard or along the edge of any yard as follows:

Fences, walls, and hedges must comply with the Visibility at Intersections Section 6-305.4 of the Zoning Ordinance.

- No fence or wall shall be installed so as to block or divert a natural drainage flow on to or off of any other land.
- No fence or wall shall be installed over an occupied public utility and drainage easement.
- Fences may be located along all front, side and rear yards and may be constructed on any common property line.
- With the exception of chain link no fences shall be permitted in the floodplain and/or floodway.

Appearance

Fences and walls shall comply with the following standards:

Materials

- Customary Materials: Fences and walls shall be constructed of materials customarily used and manufactured as common fence or wall materials, including solid wood, brick, masonry, stone, chain link, wrought iron, decorative metal materials, or products designed to resemble these materials. Chain link fencing approved as part of a Site Plan shall be vinyl coated and colored dark green, brown or black. Low voltage invisible fences with buried lines are excluded from this requirement.
- Prohibited Materials: Fences and walls constructed of debris, junk, rolled plastic, sheet metal, plywood, or other waste materials are prohibited in all zone districts, unless such materials have been recycled and reprocessed into building materials marketed to the general public and designed for use as fencing or wall materials. Vinyl slats or thin fabric inserts or coverings are not allowed to be used in any fencing. Barbed wire, electrified fences, or similar products shall not be permitted in any residential, mixed use, office, or commercial district except on property used primarily for agricultural purposes.
- Finished Side to Outside – All fences and walls shall be oriented with the “good” or “finished” side facing outward (i.e. one side has visible support framing and the other does not) rather than facing the interior of the lot. This provision shall not preclude the placement of a shadow-box type fence.
- Uniformity of Materials – Fencing and wall segments located along a single lot side shall be of uniform height, material, type, color, and design and shall be uniform for the entire length of the fence or wall, except where a fence or wall segment transitions from one yard to another or from one height to another.

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- In industrial or commercial districts, any fence installed in a front yard shall be at least fifty (50) percent transparent (that is, it shall obscure no more than 50 percent of the view into the land). This section is not intended to prevent the screening of recycle centers, junk yards, scrap yards, and the like from the view of surrounding properties or public right-of-way.

Height

- In residential districts, fences and walls shall not exceed a height of thirty (30) inches in a required front yard and six (6) feet in a required side and rear yard. A fence may exceed the thirty (30) inches if the fence is at least seventy-five (75) percent transparent. Examples of 75% transparency include but are not restricted to: open wrought iron or chain link.
- In commercial and industrial districts, fences and walls shall not exceed a height of four (4) feet in a required front yard and ten (10) feet in a required side or rear yard. A fence may exceed the thirty (30) inches if the fence is at least seventy-five (75) percent transparent. Examples of 75% transparency include but are not restricted to: open wrought iron or chain link.
- In any district, if a fence is constructed on top of a retaining or other wall or berm, the combined height of the fence and wall/berm shall not exceed the maximum height that would apply to a fence or wall alone, in relation to the grade on the highest side of the wall.
- On corner lots or double frontage lots, a fence in the second front yard, may exceed thirty (30) inches in height but not six (6) feet so long as it does not extend past the front façade of the primary building and is setback at least fifteen (15) from the edge of pavement or on the right of way line, whichever is greater.
- On corner lots or double frontage lots, a fence in the second front yard, may exceed four (4) feet in height but not ten (10) feet so long as it does not extend past the front façade of the primary building and is setback at least fifteen (15) from the edge of pavement or on the right of way line, whichever is greater.

Maintenance

- Maintenance Required: All fences and walls shall be maintained in good repair and in a safe and attractive condition, including but not limited to replacement of missing, decayed, or broken structural and decorative elements.

Building Code Requirements

- No permit required for fences, walls or hedges.

Contact Information

- Planning and Zoning Office – (615) 325-6776 ext. 227
- Building Code Office – (615) 325-6776 ext. 230