

A Guide to Building a Fence or Landscape Screen



Building a Fence or Landscape Screen

Fences and Landscape Screens provide many benefits to home and business owners and often enhance properties by defining ownership, creating privacy and providing security. However, without regulating height and location, fences may degrade livability or become a safety hazard. The City of Coquitlam Zoning Bylaw No. 3000 regulates fences and landscape screens.

This brochure is a guide to help you become familiar with fence height and construction regulations. It also provides some examples of “best practice” standards in the City of Coquitlam.

It is not mandatory to have a fence, nor is a permit from the City required to build one.

In some cases, it may become necessary to build a structure instead of a fence because of topography or slope, such as a concrete wall. In these instances, some walls may require a building permit. If you are unsure whether or not the structure you would like to build requires a permit, contact the Building Permits Division.

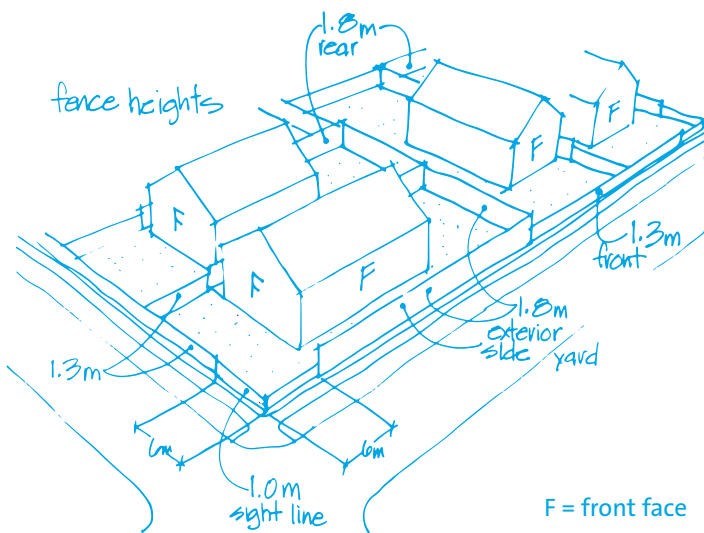
This brochure has been prepared for convenience only and is not intended to take the place of municipal bylaws. Please refer to Section 516 of the Zoning Bylaw for detailed regulations, or visit our online Zoning Bylaw at coquitlam.ca/zoningbylaw

You may wish to read our brochure entitled “Retaining Walls and Steep Slopes” if you are thinking about building a fence on sloped land, or on a wall.

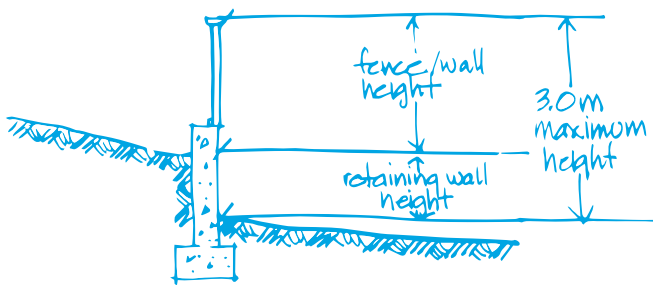
Fence Height

In general, a fence may not exceed a height of 1.8 m (6 feet) in all residential R, C-1, C-5 and P-4 zones. There are exceptions to this rule, and they are;

- except where the fence is located forward of the front face of the principal building, in which case it shall not exceed 1.3 metres (4.3 feet) This does not apply to exterior side yards facing a street.
- except where corner lots require vision clearance in order to maintain sightlines for vehicles at intersections. Therefore, fences or landscape screens may not exceed 1 metre (3.3 feet) in height when located within 6 metres (20 feet) of the intersection of property lines at the exterior corner of a lot. Fence heights in all other zones may not exceed 3.1 metres (10 feet)



- The combined height of a retaining wall and fence may not exceed 3 metres (9.8 feet)

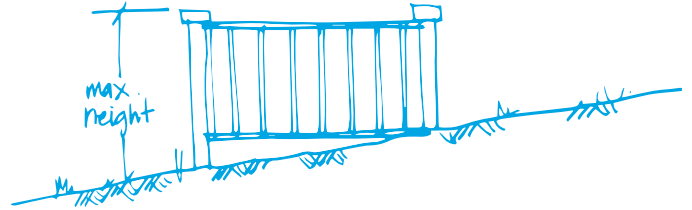


Note

You should know that landscape screen heights are not regulated, except as described above where located within 6 metres of the property corner of two streets.

Measuring Fence Height

The maximum height of a fence is measured from the grade of the surrounding soil to the top of the fence. The height of a fence on a sloped surface may be determined by measuring from the high side of each panel. The maximum permitted height may not be exceeded when measured at this point.



Building Materials

Fences are commonly constructed of wood, but masonry, concrete, steel and other uniform building materials are permitted. Care should be taken to choose materials that are of good quality and that fit with the neighbourhood character. It is good practice to discuss a new fence project with a neighbour, decide on acceptable design and materials, and perhaps even share in the cost.



Prohibited Materials

- Barbed wire, razor wire, broken glass or any material that is designed to deter entry by injury, is strictly prohibited in all zones except that;
- Barbed wire is permitted in the A-3 zone, M zones, and the P-3 zone where the wire is located on a fence above the height of 1.8 metres;
- Poured concrete.



Encroachments

Placement of your fence and/or landscape screen should be made with due care and attention to property lines. It is the homeowner's responsibility to ensure that your fence is within your property boundaries. Generally, building on property that is not within your property lines is prohibited.

Placing a fence or wall on City property is strictly prohibited. If due to unique circumstances you wish to encroach on City property, or on a City Right of Way, you should contact the Engineering Department early in your design phase. Although not usually allowed, some minor exceptions may be made.



Did you Know?

Correcting mistakes by moving or removing fences, walls and landscape screens can be expensive. One way to accurately ensure the correct placement of a fence is by engaging the services of a BC Land Surveyor. If you are lucky enough to have a copy of a "forms survey" in your property records, it will contain the location of your property lines in relationship to your building foundation. No luck? Contact the Building Division and we may have a copy on file.

Association of BC Land Surveyors abcls.ca

Did you Know?

Fence: The City of Coquitlam Zoning Bylaw defines a fence as: "...means a structure, not being a building, intended for the purpose of total or partial physical and/or visual separation or enclosure of a property or portion thereof; includes a wall, not being part of a building, intended for the purpose of total or partial physical and/or visual separation or enclosure of a property, does not include retaining wall..."

Landscape Screen: The City of Coquitlam Zoning Bylaw defines a Landscape Screen as "...means a barrier composed of a continuous row of shrubs, trees, compact evergreen hedges or any combination thereof."

Construction Sites

For both residential and commercial construction sites, the BC Building Code states that when construction or demolition activity may constitute a hazard to the public, a fence or barricade not less than 1.8 m high shall be erected between the site and a public way or open sides of a construction site.

If you witness a potentially dangerous situation, contact WorkSafe BC at 604 276-3100 or visit WorksafeBC.com.



Board of Variance

If you feel that your particular situation requires a relaxation of the zoning regulations that apply to fences, you have an option to appear before the Board of Variance. You will have to demonstrate "undue hardship" resulting from aspects of the site that cause difficulty in complying with a regulation. Contact the Planning & Development Department for further information.

If you would like information on pool enclosures and fencing, see our brochure entitled "Swimming Pool and Hot Tub Requirements".



Questions?

- **Building a Fence or Landscape Screen**
Building Permits Division
604-927-3441
coquitlam.ca/building
- **Location or permission to build on City-controlled lands including rights-of-way**
Engineering & Public Works
604-927-3500
coquitlam.ca/encroachment
- **Zoning Inquiries**
Development Planning Division
604-927-3430
coquitlam.ca/zoning
- **Potentially Dangerous Situation**
WorkSafe BC
604 276-3100
WorksafeBC.com
- **Correct Placement of a Fence**
Association of British Columbia Land Surveyors
250-655-7222
abcls.ca



Date of Issue: May 2016

This information has been prepared to provide information only. It is not a legal document. If any contradiction exists between this document and the relevant City Bylaws, Codes or Policies, the text of the Bylaws, Codes or Policies shall be the legal authority.



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Coquitlam