

Residential Retaining Walls

Permit & Building Requirements

1. Retaining walls supporting less than 48" of unbalanced fill do not require a permit.
2. Retaining walls that cross over property lines regardless of height, and walls supporting more than 48" of unbalanced fill require:
 - engineered plans
 - a building permit
 - a sealed 3rd party verification letter at inspection
3. Retaining walls should not compromise the foundations of nearby structures, typically the height of the wall is the distance the wall should be from nearby structures (this is for structures located on the high side of the wall).
4. Walls taller than 30" from grade require a 36" guard or rail at the top for safety.
5. Walls taller than 42" require screening with shrubs at the base of the wall. These shrubs need to be located on your property, allow approx. 2' at the base of the wall for the screening shrubs.
6. A site inspection is included as part of the permit, this inspection is conducted by the Planning department staff. During this inspection the guard rail and screening will be verified. For questions please contact the Planning department at 919-469-4082.

Submit:

- Residential application
- 2 copies of the plot plan with wall located and dimensioned to the property lines
- 2 copies of engineered plans

Wall Location:

1. Walls less than 8' tall can go up to the rear and side property lines, but may not encroach into the roadway front or roadway side setbacks. Walls may not be located in an easement, and must remain 5' from a vegetated buffer.
2. Walls taller than 8' must meet the setback requirements for the main dwelling.
3. If the proposed wall is closer than 5' to a setback line, easement or buffer, an as-built survey will be required.

Measuring and Calculations:

1. Wall height is measured from grade at the face of the wall.
2. Unbalanced fill is measured with a horizontal line away from the wall, perpendicular to the rear of the wall, to a point equal to the height of the wall.