

Building Inspections

Retaining Wall Guide (Residential)

General Information:

- All retaining walls, or any portion thereof, shall be **located entirely on the applicable parcel**, and shall **not be located within any Right-of-Way, Easement or Covenant area**.
- All retaining walls must conform to the maximum fence height in SECTION 6.10 of BYLAW 4500. For further information, please contact the City of Nanaimo **Planning Section** at **250-755-4429**. For all **Single Family Residential Zones** the maximum fence heights are:
 - Front yard = 1.2m (3.94 ft)
 - Side & rear yard = 2.4m (7.87 ft)
 - Flanking street side yard = 1.8m (5.90 ft)
- Where a guard rail is required by the *BC Building Code*, the minimum required guard rail is not included in the calculation of fence height.
- All retaining walls **require a Building Permit** when they are greater than 1.5m (5'-0") in height.
- All retaining walls **require a Building Permit** when they **support ground** that is **critical to the stability of building foundations**. [See BCBC 2012 A-9.3.2.9(4)]

Concrete Retaining Walls:

- Concrete retaining walls **require a Building Permit and Structural Engineer's certification** when they are greater than 1.5m (5'-0") in height.

Interlocking Block Retaining Walls:

- Interlocking block retaining walls **require a Building Permit and Geotechnical Engineer's certification** when required by manufacturer's specifications or when they are greater than 1.5m (5'-0") in height, whichever is lower.

Wood Retaining Walls:

- All wood retaining walls & cribbing **shall be pressure-treated** [BCBC 2012 9.3.2.9(4)] **when:**
 - they support ground that is critical to the stability of building foundations (regardless of height), or [See BCBC 2018 A-9.3.2.9(4).]
 - when they are greater than 1.2m (4'-0") in height.
- and **require a Building Permit and Geotechnical Engineer's certification when:**
- they support ground that is critical to the stability of building foundations (regardless of height), or [See BCBC 2018 A-9.3.2.9(4).]
 - when they are greater than 1.5m (5'-0") in height.

Other Types of Retaining Walls:

- For all other types of retaining walls, please confirm with the Building Inspection Division as to whether a Building Permit is required.