



CITY OF BUFFALO, MINNESOTA

Building a Fence

BEFORE YOU PUT UP YOUR FENCE, you should:

- Look for your property survey. Contact us if you don't have one. There's a good chance we have one in your parcel record!
- If you have your survey, locate your property irons. Property lines are the dark outer lines on the survey, and at these intersecting lines, there is an iron. **Note:** The City does NOT mark your property lines. When you mark them, use the standard color: property is usually marked with pink spray paint or a pink flag. Irons can be buried 12"-18" but you can find them with the use of a metal detector.
- **Call Gopher One at 811 for utility locates.** Allow 2-3 days for each utility to do this. Different utilities will have a different color flag or paint.

WHERE CAN THE FENCE BE LOCATED?

Nothing is more important than location when building a fence. An improperly located fence can result in ordinance violations, friction between neighbors, civil lawsuits or even the need to move your fence. To avoid costly and frustrating problems, your fence must be located entirely inside your property lines, or on them but CANNOT cross them. **Note:** The "finished" side of your fence ALWAYS faces your neighbors and posts must be on your side of the property line.

Fences must not impede access to public utilities. If you have an electrical transformer in your yard, please allow a 10 ft clearance all the way around it. Please allow 5 ft minimum clearance for all other structures (fire hydrants, pedestals, storm drains, etc.). It is critical that City staff has adequate access to public infrastructure. If your fence damages a utility, the homeowner is liable for repairs. Contact the City to request a site visit for utility conflicts or concerns.

FENCES THAT ABUT STREETS

Privacy fences abutting a public street require a setback of 20 feet from the **property line**; and those abutting an alley require a five-foot setback from the **property line**. Fences 48" high or shorter with a 75% open-weave may be allowed inside the setback area.

PLACING THE FENCE ON PROPERTY LINES

Certain setbacks from property lines are required for installing fences. The minimum setback for fences is two feet from the property line unless you and your neighbor agree to it being on the line. You CANNOT cross the property line. Reminder: The finished side of the fence will always face your neighbor.

PLACING THE FENCE WITHIN EASEMENT LINES

Easement area is generally 10 feet front and back, and 5 feet on each side. At times, there are larger utility easements for storm sewer, natural gas, and electricity. You will see this easement area marked with a dashed line on your property survey. The easement area allows for drainage and is where the City staff, or any other public utility employee/contractor, can access for that utility placement and those services. No fence shall obstruct the flow of water nor divert water onto a neighboring property.

If you place the fence inside this easement area (or a portion of it), your fence is liable to be taken down and/or not repaired per the City Code Sec. 50-358(b). It is not the utility's responsibility to repair nor replace any kind of fence inside this easement area. Property owners will be responsible for moving a fence that may be installed over an easement.

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HOW HIGH CAN MY FENCE BE?

The maximum allowed fence height is affected by your lot's location, where the fence is located on your lot, and by visibility triangles (refer to illustration below).

Rear Yard. Fences on interior lots can be no more than six feet high in the side or rear yard.

Front Yard. Fences in the front yard cannot be more than 48" in height and must be open weave (75% open, chain link, for example). Split rail fence may be placed in front and rear yards but should not exceed the height maximums allowed. For this purpose, the front yard is usually the first 30 feet from the front property line.

Corner lots. No fence or screen shall be permitted within the triangular area defined as beginning at the intersection of the projected curb line of two intersecting streets, thence thirty (30) feet from the point of beginning on the other curb line, thence to the point of beginning on the other curb. (see example below)



Determining what is the front yard on a corner lot takes special care because the front yard is not always where the home's front door is located. On a corner lot, the front yard is the yard with the shortest dimension against the public right-of-way (the yard with the shortest curb length). Through-lots can have two front yards. Contact the Planning & Zoning Department with any questions.

CAN A FENCE BE TALLER THAN 6 FEET?

Residential fences are usually between 4 to 6 feet in height. A rear lot line fence can be as high as 8 feet with an approved conditional use permit, but only if the fence is set 10 feet back from the rear property line.

WHAT MATERIALS CAN I USE?

Fences must be constructed of durable materials such as wood, rigid vinyl, ornamental steel, or chain link. Every fence must be constructed so the **finished side faces your neighbors' property**. The structural side of your fence must face your property.

POOL FENCES

A fence surrounding a swimming pool must be constructed to keep children from entering the pool enclosure unless an ASTM certified safety cover is installed. Pool fences and gates must be at least four feet high. There can be no openings greater than four inches either through or under the fence or gate. Pool fences must be constructed without handholds or footholds. Gates must be self-closing and self-catching.

Buffalo

CITY OF BUFFALO, MINNESOTA

permits@ci.buffalo.mn.us

212 Central Avenue, Buffalo MN 55313

Phone 763-682-1181 | Fax 763-682-6376

