

City of West Allis Department of Building Inspection & Neighborhood Services
Informational Bulletin

Fences and Site Obstructions

BINS 9/15

for One and Two Family Dwellings

Fences may be constructed in all residential districts of the City. Permits are not required for fences; however there are several regulations that have to be followed for all fences. This handout will explain the basics of the fence requirements. A full list of fence requirements and regulations can be found in the Revised Municipal Code of West Allis.

Fencing Materials

- Fences must be constructed of approved materials such as prefabricated fencing sold at retail outlets or treated lumber. Fences may not be constructed of sheet metal or other salvage materials. The building inspector will determine appropriate building materials.
- Electrified fences are not permitted.
- Barbed wire fences are not permitted on residential properties.

Good Side Out

- The “good” side of a fence must face outward from the property towards the neighbor, the street, or the alley.

Good Neighbor

- The City suggests contacting your neighbors before installing your fence. Early discussions of property line locations and fence type may defuse disputes that may occur after the fence is installed. The City recommends that you have a surveyor mark your lot lines or visit the Department of Building Inspection and Neighborhood Services to see if we have a current survey on file for your property.
- Disputes between property owners as to property lines are a civil matter and are to be resolved between property owners. The City will not get involved in property line disputes. You may be required to get a survey of your lot to resolve disputes.
- All fences shall be kept in good repair. When a fence is located up to a neighbor’s lot line, it is still the owner of the fence’s responsibility to maintain the fence.

Fence Locations & Height Requirements

- Fences may be located up to a property line but may not extend into the City right-of-way.
- **Required Front Yard.** No fences are permitted in the required front yard. The required front yard is determined by the zoning district classification but typically will consist of the area in front of the house, not including porches or decks.
- **Side and Rear Yards.** Fences are permitted in all side and rear yards.
- **Corner Lots.** For corner lots, the longer dimension of the lot abutting the street is considered the side yard, regardless of how the property is designated for addressing or other purposes. Fences are permitted in the side yard area, but not in the required front yard setback.
- **Fence Height.** The maximum height of a fence is 6’ unless located within a vision triangle (see below).
- **Vision Triangle.** The maximum height of a fence located in the vision triangle is three feet. Restricted vision areas include the area on a lot where two streets intersect; a street intersects with an alley; or an alley intersects with an alley.

For non-1 or 2 family use properties, fence installation shall be approved by the Planning Department. Contact (414)302-8466 for additional information on submittal and approval requirements.

If you have further questions call the Department of Building Inspection and Neighborhood Services at 414-302-8400.

City of West Allis Department of Building Inspection & Neighborhood Services

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