



**CITY OF DES MOINES
PLANNING BUILDING AND
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

**FENCE
INFORMATION
HANDOUT
BH-010**

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For questions not answered by this handout, our planners are available at the Front Counter during the hours of 9am-11am, Monday through Friday to answer your questions. Outside of those hours, they are only available by email or telephone.

18.40.150 Location of wall, fence, or hedge.

In any residential zone a wall, fence, or hedge is permitted under the following conditions:

- (1) Where a fence or hedge is located directly on the ground, the height of the fence shall be the vertical distance from the top board, rail, or wire to the ground directly below the fence; where a masonry wall is used as a fence, the height shall be the vertical distance from the top surface of the wall to the ground on the high side of the wall;**
- (2) In any zone a wall, fence, or hedge not more than 42 inches in height may be located and maintained on any part of a lot;**
- (3) On interior lots a wall, fence, or hedge not exceeding six feet in height may be located on any lot line to the rear of the rear line of the required front yard; provided, where a lot rears upon an alley any such wall, fence, or hedge along the lot rear line shall contain a gate affording access to the alley;**
- (4) On corner lots a fence, wall, or hedge not exceeding six feet in height may be located on the lot interior side line to the rear of the rear line of the required front yard, and on the lot rear line except that along the portion of the lot rear line constituting the width of the required side yard on the side street side, the wall, fence, or hedge shall not exceed a height of 42 inches; on the side street side of a corner lot a wall, fence, or hedge exceeding 42 inches in height shall observe the required side yard;**
- (5) On reverse corner lots a wall, fence, or hedge not exceeding six feet in height may be located on the lot interior side line to the rear of the rear line of the required front yard; if the lot rears upon an alley, a wall, fence, or hedge not exceeding six feet in height may be located on the lot rear line except that along the portion of the lot rear line constituting the width of the required side yard on the side street side, such wall, fence, or hedge shall not exceed a height of 42 inches; on the side street side, a wall, fence, or hedge exceeding 42 inches in height shall observe the required side yard;**
- (6) Where a retaining wall protecting a cut below the natural grade is located on the line separating lots or parcels, such retaining wall may be topped by a fence, wall, or hedge of the same height that would otherwise be permitted at the location if no retaining wall existed, and the top of the retaining wall shall be considered the bottom of the fence;**

- (7) Where a retaining wall contains a fill, the height of the retaining wall built to retain the fill shall be considered as contributing to the permissible height of a wall, fence, or hedge, and shall be measured from the ground on the low side; provided, that in any event a protective fence not more than 42 inches in height may be erected at the top of the retaining wall and any portion of such fence above the six-foot maximum height shall be an open-work fence; an open-work fence means a fence in which the component solid portions are evenly distributed and constitute not more than 50 percent of the total surface area of the face of the fence;
- (8) Electric fences shall not be permitted in any residential zone;
- (9) No fence shall be located in any public right-of-way;
- (10) Any fence exceeding a height of six feet, and any retaining wall exceeding a height of 48 inches shall require a building permit; the provisions and conditions of this section shall not apply to fences required by state law to surround and enclose public utility installations, or to chain link fences enclosing school grounds and public playgrounds. [Ord. 1237 § 4, 1999; Ord. 175 § 1(24.48.150), 1964.]

Rear Yard Gate Required if on Alley

