Fences

Introduction



Photo credit: Tracy Adams

Residential Fences

This Guide has been prepared to assist you in understanding the permitting and construction process of installing a fence, wall or privacy screen in the single -family residential zoning districts in Clawson.

Permits Required

The erection, construction or alteration of any fence, wall or privacy screen requires a Building Permit.

Who Can Apply for a Permit?

Permits may be issued to a licensed contractor or to a homeowner for their primary residence.

- If a contractor is performing the work, it is recommended that the contractor apply for the permit.
- If the property owner is the applicant, the City will hold the property owner responsible for the work, regardless of who performed the work
- Rental property work must be done by licensed contractors

Note: All contractors must register with the Building Department by presenting a current trade license, Drivers license, and copy of liability insurance

Where Do I Get a Permit Application?

Applications are available at the Building Department or on the City website: Link to Building Application

What Information Is Required with the Permit Application?

- Completed Building Permit Application form
- Dimensioned drawing (may use Google Earth image, sketch or survey image): o show lot dimensions' o show property lines, easements and structures o show location of the proposed fence
- Elevation drawing o show design o show fence height o show depth of footings
- Description of fence type including materials and color
- Applicable fee
- A Letter of Support from owner(s) sharing property lines is recommended

What Happens After the Application Is Submitted?

The application is reviewed by the Building Official for compliance to current Building Codes and City Ordinances.

The applicant will be notified within 10 business days if the plan is approved or if deficiencies must be addressed and will be informed of additional permit requirements and fees.

Permits will be issued following review and receipt of applicable fees.

What Codes Apply?

Clawson Zoning Ordinance: Sec. 34-5.13 -
Fence, wall and privacy fence regulations in the R-1 and R-2 districts

Fences

Permits

Fence Placement & Standards

This is a guide and not necessarily an all-inclusive catalog of standards. Be sure to review the Clawson Zoning Ordinance for complete standards.

- Fences and walls shall not be placed in a front yard, except as otherwise permitted by ordinance.
- Fences & walls may not extend further toward the front lot line than the front of the building line
- A privacy fences may have a height of up to six feet in rear yards and interior side yards
- Chain link fences may not exceed a height of four feet
- On corner lots where the rear yard abuts another rear yard, privacy fences in the exterior side yard may have a maximum height of six feet, and constructed a minimum of six inches from the edge of the public sidewalk.
- Where the exterior side yard of a corner lot shares a common street line with a front yard in the same block, a privacy fence in the exterior side yard may have a maximum height of six feet, and be constructed a minimum of six inches from the edge of the public sidewalk. The exterior side yard fence shall not extend toward the front of the lot farther than the front setback line.
- Fences which are a part of a deck structure shall not exceed four feet in height above the surface of the deck.
- Open fences less than 30 inches in height that serve an architectural or decorative landscaping function and that neither enclose nor obscure property may be placed in any yard. Chain link shall not be permitted.

Materials

All fences shall be constructed of durable materials, such as painted or stained wood, vinyl, or chain link. Chain link fences shall not include woven or otherwise appended screening materials.



Photo credit: Hunter Haley

Construction and Maintenance

- All fences in residential districts must be of sound construction with adequate supports and footings (typical spacing is from eight to ten feet and posts are generally set in concrete). The fence shall be installed plumb and maintained as not to become unsightly. Wooden and vinyl fences shall be freestanding and not attached to other fences or the former support posts of other fences, such as chain link fences.
- Damaged or deteriorated fences, including fences with peeling paint, shall be repaired or removed within 30 days of damage or notice of nuisance from the building department.
- A fence may be installed by the owner any residential lot in the city at the sole expense of the owner desiring to construct the fence. Such partition fences shall at all times be maintained in a neat, substantial and safe condition at the sole expense of the owner constructing such fence, or upon such other basis as may be mutually agreed upon with the adjoining property owner.

For questions, contact the City of Clawson Building & Planning Department:
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