

LOWER ALLEN TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT PERMIT APPLICATION CHECKLIST – FENCES and WALLS

Fences and walls are regulated by the Zoning Ordinance--primarily height limits and distance from lot lines. The PA Uniform Construction Code (UCC) also applies to walls and fences in certain circumstances. The purpose of this form is to enable applicants to determine which rules apply, and to submit required information that will clearly and quickly demonstrate code compliance. Complete text of Zoning Ordinance Section 220-215, Fences and Walls, can be viewed on, and printed from www.latwp.org. (Main menu tab "Ordinances", select "Code of the Township of Lower Allen", scroll to Zoning Chapter 220)

ZONING CODE

Height limits: Fences and walls may not obstruct view at street intersections, so the height limitation is **3 feet (36 inches) within the clear sight triangle** (measured 25 ft. in each direction from intersection of street center lines). Elsewhere **in required front yards**, fences and walls are limited to **3.5 feet (42 inches)**. For lots with multiple street frontages, each street frontage is considered a front yard. **Within required side and rear yards**, the height limit is **6 feet (72 inches)**. Anywhere **outside of required yards**, where a primary building can be built, the height limit is **8 feet (96 inches)**--see zoning district regulations for required building setbacks in front, side and rear yards. See checklist on reverse side for other height exceptions.

Setback from lot lines: **Fences and walls may be constructed up to, but not on, any property line.** If surveyor's markings are not present, a lot survey can be required to determine proper fence or wall placement. Fences and walls that are installed on or across lot lines could have to be relocated or removed at your expense, unless a recorded consent and easement agreement, signed by all affected lot owners, accompanies your permit application. A sample agreement form and instructions are available.

BUILDING CODE

The UCC exempts fences that are not taller than 6 feet (72 inches). Although only a zoning permit is required, the fence installer should follow all manufacturer's installation instructions, such as proper anchoring of posts, and proper fastening of solid panels to rails and posts. This guidance is particularly important for solid panel fences because they are exposed to significant lateral wind loads.

The UCC exempts retaining walls that do not exceed 4 feet (48 inches) in height, unless they are supporting a surcharge (e.g. saturated soil) or are impounding Class I, II or III A liquids. Walls that are not exempt require both zoning and building permits. A structural engineering design must be submitted with your permit application.

Fences or walls that provide a required safety barrier for swimming pools or spas must comply with UCC requirements, and both zoning and building permits are required. Obtain the safety barrier requirements from your pool installer or one of our construction code officials and include compliance information with your permit application.

Use this checklist to assist with completing a general permit application and submitting supplemental information for particular fence or wall situations.

1. Insert property, applicant and property owner information, then check the box to request code compliance review for Zoning, Chapter 220.
2. If the fence or wall you wish to build is also regulated by the UCC and requires a building permit, check either the IRC box if the proposed structure is associated with a one or two family dwelling, or the International Building Code box if the proposed structure is associated with any other use.
3. In the “Proposed Work/Use” section, provide a thorough description of the fence or wall you want to install, including height, materials and location on the property (e.g., install 4 ft. tall preservative-treated wood post & rail fence along side and rear lot lines). If the fence or wall will perform a specific function that requires a building permit, or you are using a height exception in the zoning regulations, please include that information in your proposed work/use statement, and check the appropriate boxes below on this page. (e.g. “Install 4 ft. tall chain link swimming pool safety barrier with 2 self-closing, self-latching gates in rear yard”, or “Install 8 ft. tall solid panel privacy screen around dumpster in side yard”.)
4. Provide project cost, only if a building permit is required. Use contract cost or fair market value of labor and materials.
5. Sign and print your name, and provide date on page 2.
6. Submit the completed General Permit Application, a site plan (surveyor's plot plan or aerial photo with fence/wall location highlighted, and fence/wall height and distance from lot lines noted) and any required building permit information. Also include the application fee of \$25 for zoning only, or \$50 if both zoning and building code approvals are required. Application fee will be credited to your permit fee. If you checked any boxes below, attach a copy of this page to your application.

RETAINING WALLS: Check applicable boxes and provide additional information.

- Wall will be greater than 4 ft. tall. Provide engineer's design, and indicate height (not limited). If this retaining wall will be within 5 feet of the property line, a safety barrier, at least 3 ft. high, is required on the up-slope side of the wall. Provide safety barrier details.
- Wall will be less than or equal to 4 ft. tall, but will be used to retain a surcharge or regulated liquids. Indicate this fact in the proposed work/use description on the application, and provide engineer's design.

FENCE/WALL HEIGHT EXCEPTIONS: Check appropriate boxes and provide additional information.

- Front yard fence on a farm may be up to 6 ft. high if at least 50% of the fence area is open area. Indicate proposed height greater than 3.5 ft. and provide fence material details to show at least 50% open area.
- Fence or wall is solid screening required for compliance with Section 220-201, so it may be up to 6 ft. high in a front yard, and up to 8 ft. high in a side or rear yard. Indicate proposed height, and if in front yard, indicate that the solid screening will not obstruct clear sight distance at driveways or street intersections.
- Fence is not in a required yard, will have at least 50% open area, and will be associated with a sports court or athletic field. Provide proposed height (not limited), fence materials, and structural design.
- Fence or wall in a required side or rear yard may be up to 8 ft. high if the portion of the structure above 6 ft. high is at least 50% open area. Provide details to show open area above 6 ft. height.
- Fence may be up to 8 ft. high because it meets the public alley exception contained in 220-215.B.(2)(e). Provide site plan details to show minimum 10 ft. fence setback and qualifying corner lot situation.
- Fence may be up to 6 ft. high because it meets the back-to-back corner lot exception contained in 220-215.B.(2)(f). Provide site plan details to show qualifying corner lot situation.