



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ BROCHURES

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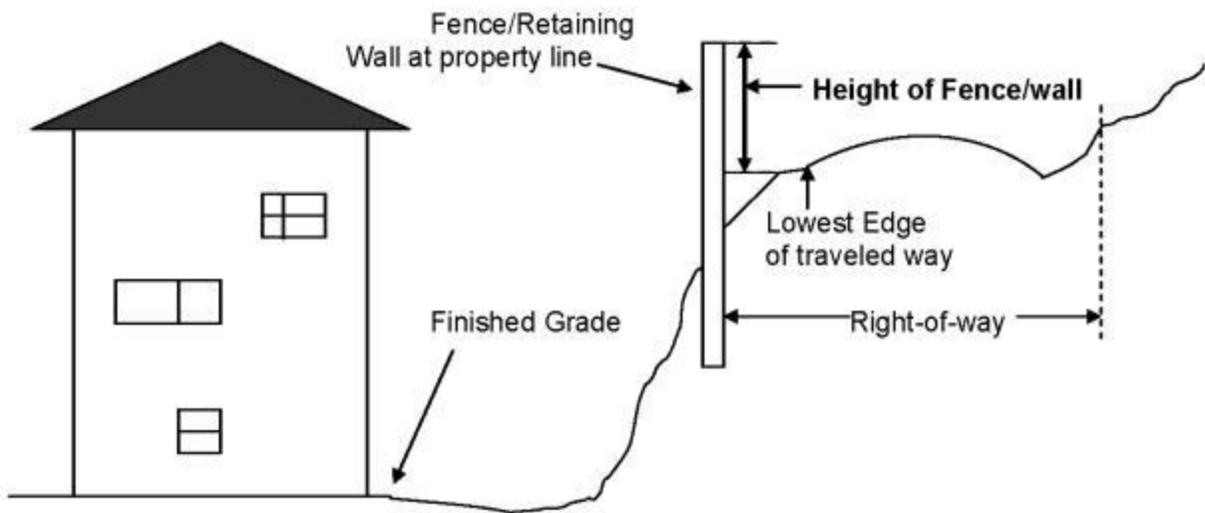
County Code Section 13.10.525

Fences and Retaining Walls

Height Maximums in Required Yards

- (A) The purposes of fence and/or retaining wall regulations for yards abutting on streets are:
- (1) To ensure adequate visibility of vehicles entering the street from driveways, adequate sight distance from such vehicles, and adequate sight distance at street corners.
 - (2) To ensure adequate light and air for the street area.
 - (3) To preserve a harmonious and compatible street front appearance.
- (B) The purposes of fence and/or retaining wall regulations for side and rear yards which do not abut on streets are:
- (1) To provide for privacy screening of these yard areas.
 - (2) To ensure that light and air of abutting properties are protected from excessively high manmade structures.
- (C) The height regulations for fences and/or retaining walls are:
- (1) The height of fences and/or retaining walls is determined as follows:
 - (a) By measuring the exposed face of the fence and/or wall at its tallest point, from finished grade at the base, to the top of the fence and/or wall, except as provided in subsections (C)(4) and (5) of this section.
 - (b) Where a parcel slopes down from a public or private right-of-way, the height of a fence or retaining wall shall be measured from the lowest elevation of the traveled portion of the right-of-way nearest the fence or retaining wall to the top of the fence and/or wall as shown in the diagram below, except as provided in subsections (C)(4) and (5) of this section.

See illustration below:



Height of fence or wall on parcel sloping down from right-of-way

(2) Maximum Fence and Retaining Wall Heights.

(a) In agricultural zone districts, fencing for agricultural purposes may have heights up to six feet in all yards; provided, that such fencing, including gates, is:

(i) six feet or less in height; and

(ii) made of wire which is spaced a minimum of six inches apart (i.e., typical field fencing) or horizontally oriented wooden members which are spaced a minimum of one foot apart (i.e., typical wooden corral fencing).

Fencing meeting these criteria is exempt from development permit approval unless located on property adjacent to Highway One, in which case a development permit is required. In the Coastal Zone, a coastal development permit will be required for all such fencing unless it is excluded from coastal permit requirements pursuant to SCCC 13.20.060 or 13.20.070.

(b) Except as provided in SCCC 13.10.323(D)(5)(a), maximum heights for fences and retaining walls not located in a corner sight clearance triangle are shown on the fence location and height table given in subsection (C)(3) of this section. Examples of corner sight clearance triangles are shown in the diagrams below.

(c) Except as provided in SCCC 13.10.323(D)(5)(a), within corner sight clearance triangles no fence or retaining wall shall exceed three feet in height, if the fence or retaining wall is:

(i) Located in a corner sight clearance triangle on a parcel located at the intersection of two local neighborhood streets for a distance of 30 feet along each street right-of-way; or

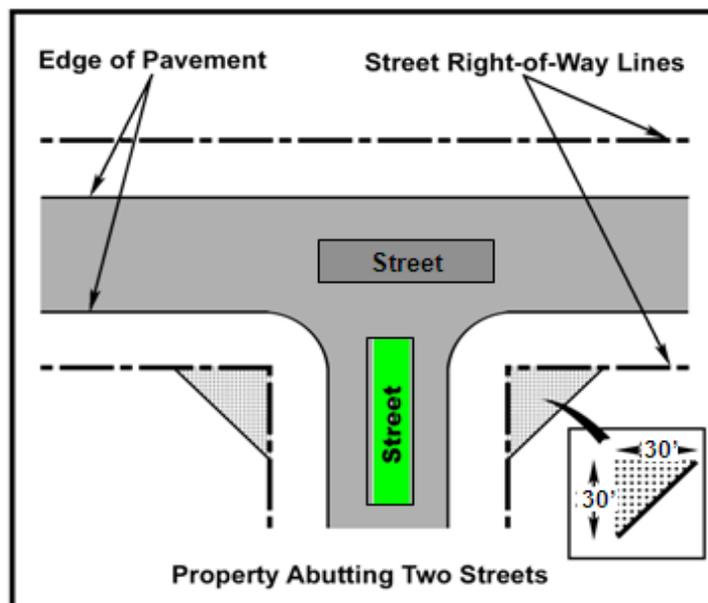
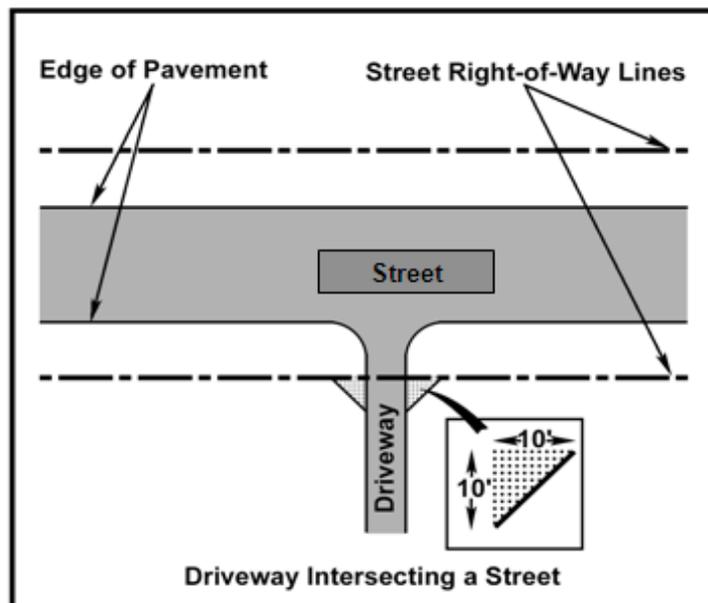
- (ii) Located in a residential driveway or alley corner sight clearance triangle for a distance of 10 feet along the street right-of-way on each side of the driveway or alley; or
- (iii) Located in a corner sight clearance triangle determined to be applicable by the County based on professional standards established by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) or other applicable technical publications. Greater sight clearance triangles may be required for front and side yards adjacent to roads that allow vehicular travel speeds of more than 25 miles per hour.

Sight Distance Triangles for local residential streets

10 foot minimum Sight Distance Triangle for driveways abutting public or private streets (top diagram)

**30 foot minimum
Triangle for streets
public streets (bottom**

**Sight Distance
abutting private or
diagram)**



(3) Fence Location and Height Table

Property and Fence Location	Maximum Height without Permit (Outside of Corner Triangles**, ***)	Maximum Height with Over-Height Fence Certification (Outside of Corner Triangles**, ***)	Maximum Height with a Level IV or above Permit ***
Front Yard inside Urban Services Line (USL) and Rural Services Line (RSL)	3 feet*	6 feet	As determined through permit process
Front Yard outside USL and RSL	3 feet*	8 feet	As determined through permit process
Side/Rear Yard Abutting on a Street	6 feet	8 feet if fence at least 5 feet back from property line	As determined through permit process
Side/Rear Yard Not Abutting on a Street	8 feet	N/A: already at 8 feet; Level IV to go higher	As determined through permit process

The following are allowed in all locations except for corner sight clearance triangles:

1. Archways/trellises/ pergolas up to 8 feet tall associated with a walkway through a fence and not making up more than 25% of the length of the fence along the applicable property line.
2. Open decorative features such as lattice that do not exceed the maximum fence heights by more than 6 inches.

*Except as allowed by SCCC [13.10.323\(D\)\(5\)\(a\)](#)

**County Public Works Department guidelines establish applicable corner sight clearance triangle requirements

*** In the coastal zone, a coastal development permit will be required for all fence and retaining wall development unless it is exempt from coastal development permit requirements pursuant to SCCC [13.20.060](#) or [13.20.070](#).

(4) Walkway fence openings, with or without gates, may have associated archways/trellises/ pergolas up to a maximum height of eight feet without a discretionary approval, except in corner sight clearance triangles, where no fence or retaining wall shall exceed three feet in height. Archways/trellises/ pergolas may not make up more than 25 percent of the length of the fence along a given property line without a Level IV development permit. Notwithstanding the above exceptions for discretionary approval and development permits, in the coastal zone all such archways/trellises/ pergolas shall require a coastal development permit unless exempt from coastal development permit requirements pursuant to SCCC 13.20.060 or 13.20.070.

(5) Open architectural, decorative, and ornamental features such as lattice may exceed the given maximum fence heights by no more than six inches without a discretionary approval, except in corner sight clearance triangles, where no fence or retaining wall shall exceed three feet in height. Open means that no more than 50 percent of the feature may be opaque. Notwithstanding the above exceptions for discretionary approval and development permits, in the coastal zone all such archways/trellises/ pergolas shall require a coastal development permit unless exempt from coastal development permit requirements pursuant to SCCC 13.20.060 or 13.20.070.

(D) Over-Height Fence Certification. An over-height fence certification may be issued upon the Planning Director making the findings required by SCCC 18.10.230(A) and, if in the Coastal Zone, the finding that the subject development will not adversely impact public views and scenic character.