

■ Putting Up a Fence or a Hedge



You don't need a building permit to put up a fence. But you do need to know Madison's ordinances governing the height and placement of fences and screening.

You also need to check for any deed restrictions or covenants on your property that might regulate improvements in your yard. Refer to the documents you signed and received when you purchased your house.

1 Find out if your proposed fence or planting project will meet the placement and height requirements

Placement

A fence may be erected up to the lot line, but no part of the fence or post may encroach over the lot line. Keep a fence or plantings back from the property line to allow easy maintenance. It is your choice whether to fence in the entire yard or only part of it.

There is no legal requirement for the "good side" of the fence to face your neighbor. But it's a good idea to discuss your fence project with your neighbors and find out their concerns.

Height

Rear or side yards. A solid screening fence or hedge located in a rear or interior side yard shall not exceed a maximum height of 6 feet above

ground level. If your yard adjoins a mixed-use, commercial or employment district, the fence or hedge may be up to 8 feet in height along the common property line.

Front or corner side yards. A solid screening fence shall not exceed 4 feet high within a front or corner side yard setback. However, a fence or hedge up to 6 feet high may be located within a corner side yard behind the rear plane of the house. Screenings fences exceeding 4 feet in height alongside the house must be set back a minimum of 4 feet from the sidewalk or property line.

Front. A fence located within a front yard may increase in height to a maximum of 5 feet if it is less than 50% opaque or to a height of 6 feet if it is less than 20% opaque.

All in-ground pools must be enclosed by a fence that is at least 4 feet high and not more than 8 feet in height. A pool fence must also have a gate with a lock.

Above-ground pools with sides that are more than 4 feet high do not need to be enclosed by a fence. However, access to an above-ground pool must be controlled. A removable ladder is an easy way to meet this requirement.

Street intersection corners may have fences or hedges that are 2½ feet or less above curb level. Trees cannot have branches lower than 10 feet above the curb level. These requirements are for fences, hedges, or trees within 25 feet, on either side, from the corner of the lot. This lets pedestrians and autos have a clear view of traffic. Call Traffic Engineering at (608) 266-4761, if you wish to request an exemption from this law.

Driveways may be lined by fences or plantings that you cannot see through. Within 10 feet of the intersection of any driveway with any street-side lot line, fences or plantings cannot be more than 2½ feet above curb level.

Retaining walls are subject to the same height considerations as other types of fences. In the case of a fence on a retaining wall, fence height is measured. If a fence is setback at

Need Help?

We are happy to answer your questions and suggest solutions to your problems any time during planning or construction.



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least 4 feet from the retaining wall, then the fence height is measured from the base of the fence.

The diagram below shows these height and placement requirements.

Materials

Fences and walls located in front or street side yard areas must be made of materials such as wood, ornamental metal, vinyl-coated chain link, brick, or stone. Uncoated chain link fences may be used in interior side or rear yards.

Temporary fencing, including the use of wood or plastic snow fences between November 1 and April 1, protection of excavation and construction sites, and protection of plants during grading and construction is permitted during the time of an approved building permit or up to 180 consecutive days per calendar year.

2 Locate your lot lines. There should be metal stakes at each corner of your lot. Talk to your neighbors or use a metal detector. If you can't locate your lot lines yourself, you may need to hire a surveyor. The City cannot help you with this. It is the homeowner's responsibility to locate all property lines before construction of any fence.

3 Call the Diggers Hotline, 1-800-242-8511, to avoid rupturing underground utilities that you may not know are there. A utility company employee will come out and mark the location of underground electric, sewer, telephone, and cable lines in your yard. You may need to change the placement of the fence or plantings if it is over the one of these lines.

4 Install your fence and plantings in good condition. Paint and repair fences on a regular basis. Trim shrubbery to maintain height requirements and keep it off of sidewalks, streets and neighbor's property.

If you're not sure that your proposed fence will meet the requirements, call (608) 266-4551 and ask for Zoning assistance. Zoning staff will be happy to advise you so that your fence is both safe and attractive.

5 Keep your fence and plantings in good condition.

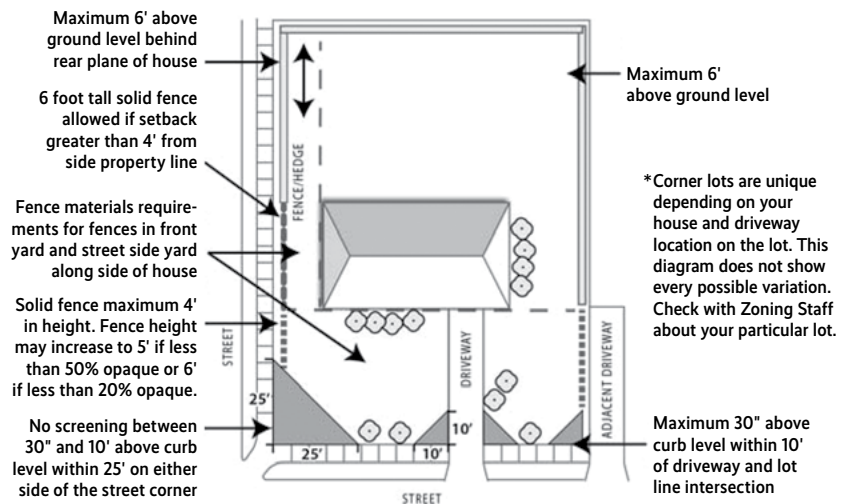
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General Guidelines for Residential Screening Heights for Plants and Fences

Corner Lot General Screening Heights for Plants and Fences*



General Screening Heights for Plants and Fences*

