

City of Hendersonville

Department of Building & Codes

Retaining Walls Policy

This policy statement is to provide basic guidance and direction for the construction of retaining walls within the City of Hendersonville. This policy addresses how the Building & Codes Department handles the construction of retaining walls and does not set aside or in any way limit how other departments, agencies or entities may regulate them. This policy in no way applies to any walls or fences not designed as retaining walls.

- **Permit Not Required** – Retaining walls less than four (4) feet in height, measured from bottom of footing to top of wall, are not required to obtain a building permit from the Department of Building & Codes unless the wall is supporting the structure in some manner. Whether or not a permit is actually required, all retaining walls are required to comply with all applicable construction and/or design requirements; specifically but not limited to *Section R404.5 of the 2012 International Residential Code* for retaining walls built in residential applications and *Sections 1610 & 1807 of the 2012 IBC* for all other locations.
- **Permit Required** – Retaining walls exceeding four (4) feet in height may be required to have a permit or approval. A separate permit may not be required for any retaining wall constructed as part of another permit and/or approval.

Retaining walls that directly or indirectly connect structurally to another structure or building must be designed by a State licensed professional. Such a condition would include any retaining wall carrying any portion of a house load. The house load is deemed to extend from the bottom of the footing downward at a forty-five (45) degree angle.

Additional requirements and/or documentation, such as as-built inspection reports, may be required for an individual retaining wall at the discretion of the City. Retaining walls which are part of an approved overall developmental plan or process (i.e. Site Plan and/or Subdivision Plats) are not covered by this policy. Additional information regarding retaining walls not exceeding five (5) feet in overall height may be found in the following publication - [*Typical Retaining Wall Details*](#).

Effective Date: 10/01/2014