

City of Hendersonville, TN

Department of Building & Codes

Retaining Walls – Permit Guidelines

This publication provides permitting guidelines for residential retaining walls. Additional information on how to construct retaining walls may be found by referring to our publication - **City of Hendersonville's Typical Retaining Wall Details**. Apply for permits at the **Department of Building & Codes** located at 101 Maple Drive North. Telephone: **615-822-3802**

HELPFUL HINT: You may obtain permits in your own name; however, if a contractor is to perform the work, it is strongly recommended that the contractor secure the permit and therefore be listed on the permit as the responsible party. In this way, the City will be in a better position to assist you in insuring compliance if the work is not to code. A contractor will be required to have on file with the City a Permit Bond and in certain situations be required to be State licensed in order to obtain a permit.

PRIOR TO APPLYING FOR A PERMIT

COVENANTS AND DEED RESTRICTIONS

Covenants and Deed Restrictions are regulations that are set forth by many homeowner or civic associations. While the City is not permitted to enforce these type of requirements, some of them may still restrict construction of your retaining wall. For more information, please contact your association or the Sumner County Register of Deeds, 355 North Belvedere Drive, Gallatin, TN.

MINIMUM SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All submissions for regulated retaining walls must include the following:

- Two sets of stamped construction plans or where permitted the *City of Hendersonville Retaining Walls Details*.
- Two copies of a property plat showing the location of the proposed retaining wall.

CONSTRUCTION PLANS

There are two options for construction plan submission; the requirements for each are listed below. When submitting construction plans, two complete sets are required.

1. COMPLETE SET OF PLANS

- Plans must be signed and sealed by a design professional registered in the State of Tennessee.
- Minimum scale of 1/4 inch = 1 foot; all dimensions must be shown. Other scales may be used with approval by the Department.
- Specifications for the construction materials.
- Specification for the backfill material and compaction requirements.
- Wall elevations and cross-sections of each retaining wall, to include necessary structural details. The actual ground slope at the top and the toe of the retaining wall.
- Special considerations/requirements for the foundation soil.
- Any special/required sequencing of construction of the retaining wall.
- Method of drainage behind the wall.
- Segmented walls and other proprietary products require submission of the manufacturer's information and specifications, a valid ICC Evaluation Report and design calculation signed and sealed by a registered design professional.
- Guardrail location and details for retaining wall systems 30 inches and higher, to protect pedestrian traffic where applicable.
- Multiple retaining walls located on the same lot may be included on one building permit provided the walls will be inspected and completed at the same time.

2. CITY OF HENDERSONVILLE TYPICAL RETAINING WALL DETAILS

For residential use only, these details may be used in lieu of plans signed and sealed by a design professional registered in the State of Tennessee. Retaining walls which utilize our publication - *Typical Retaining Wall Details* must comply with the following conditions:

- Only timber, reinforced masonry and reinforced concrete can be used.
- Heights no greater than 4 feet with level backfill.
- Retain no more than 4 feet of unbalanced fill or earth or not support a surcharge.
- Not subject to any special imposed loads. i.e. driveways, footings for decks, addition or structures.
- May not deviate from the typical details without prior approval.
- Cannot be tiered or stacked. The upper and lower wall shall have a horizontal separation at least the same as the lower wall is high.
- Cannot be used in problem soil areas.

HOUSE LOCATION PLATS

If you do not have a copy of your house location plat (plot plan), review your loan closing documents or contact your mortgage lending institution to obtain one. If you are unable to locate a copy of your plot plan through these sources, you may need to hire a licensed land surveyor or civil engineer to have one prepared.

OBTAINING A PERMIT

PERMIT PROCESS

Bring the construction documents as described above to the Department of Building & Codes located at 101 Maple Drive North where your permit process will begin. There you will complete a building permit application or actually obtain your permit based on your individual situation. A permit technician will then direct you to the appropriate departments and/or agencies if necessary for review and approval. The departments normally involved but not limited to, are:

- **Zoning** - ensures setback requirements, as set forth by the City of Hendersonville Zoning Ordinance, are maintained.
- **Engineering** - ensures that all overall drainage requirements are complied with as well as any possible infringement on the public right of way and/or public easements; meets all other requirements.
- **Building** – ensures compliance to the applicable building codes and design criteria.

The building permit is issued once all required approvals have been obtained and applicable fees have been paid. Residential retaining walls up to 4 feet in height may be eligible for a walk-thru process which allows you in many cases to apply for and obtain your permit in the same day.

FEES

Fees for retaining walls are calculated in the same manner as all other permits and are based on the estimated cost of construction for the entire job, including materials and labor.

AFTER OBTAINING A PERMIT

INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS

A copy of the approved construction plans, plat, and other necessary documentation should be available on the job site for the inspector during each inspection. Failure to do so could result in a failed inspection and re-inspection being required. Several inspections are required for retaining walls:

INSPECTION TYPE		REQUIREMENTS PRIOR TO INSPECTION
		Notes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approval must be obtained prior to proceeding with the next applicable element. 2. All inspections are conducted by City of Hendersonville building inspectors.
Timber	Retaining wall	Timber wall and deadman placement.
	Final	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All backfilling procedures and construction of guardrail, if required.
Masonry or Concrete	Retaining wall (footing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The footing trench/framework must be prepared and inspection prior to placement of concrete. • The bottom of the footing must bear on solid ground. • If problem soils exist a report by a geotechnical engineer may be required.
	Retaining wall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concrete blocks or forms and reinforcing steel must be in place. • Drain pipe installed with proper outfall. • If problem soils exist a report by a geotechnical engineer may be required.
	Retaining wall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All parging and water proofing must be completed and drain pipe installed and tied to the proper outfall. • If problem soils exist a report by a geotechnical engineer may be required.
	Final	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All backfilling procedures and construction of guardrail, if required.

SCHEDULING AN INSPECTION

It is the responsibility of the permit holder or his representative to notify the City when the specific stages of construction are reached which require an inspection. Any ladders, scaffolds, or testing equipment required to complete an inspection must be provided by the applicant. Inspection requests may be made using any one of the many options listed below; please have your permit number and address of the job available when scheduling any inspection. Inspection requests will normally be scheduled for the next workday.

- Automated Inspection Request – **615-590-4642** 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- BluePrince Online Permitting Software - This option is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week but you will need to be signed up to use the online system. There is no fee for access and use of this service.
- Faxed Request - **615-264-5336**. Make sure sufficient information is included to adequately determine the location of requested inspection, type of inspection and contact number.