

# RETAINING WALL REFERENCE GUIDE



Includes retaining walls, terraced walls & sea walls. This document is intended for guidance only and does not relieve property owners of the requirements of the Municipal Code Article XII Retaining Wall Standards. \*City code references follow each statement below.

<b>PERMIT REQUIRED</b>	All retaining walls 2.5' and higher must obtain a Miscellaneous Improvements building permit from the Community Development Services Department.
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<b>EXEMPTIONS 107-339)(c)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Retaining walls less than two and one-half (2.5) feet in height, and also not adjacent to water. (107-339)(c)(1)</li> <li>2. Retaining walls designed as part of a primary structure authorized by a valid building permit.(107-339)(c)(2)</li> <li>3. Retaining walls designed as part of a public capital improvement project. (107-339)(c)(3)</li> </ol>
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<b>PERMIT SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS (107-341)(c-d)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Completed application and permit fee.</li> <li>2. Site Plans, drawn to a standard engineering scale, depicting:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Property lines;</li> <li>b. Existing and proposed structures;</li> <li>c. Existing walls on or adjacent to the property that will remain in place;</li> <li>d. Existing walls that will be replaced, if applicable;</li> <li>e. Proposed wall locations;</li> <li>f. Septic drainage field location, if applicable;</li> <li>g. All utilities, easements, and drainageways, on and adjacent to the property."</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Details:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Dimensions and height of the wall;</li> <li>b. Cross section(s) of the wall including footing design;</li> <li>c. Elevations above and below the wall; and</li> <li>d. Proposed wall material.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<b>DESIGN PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS</b>
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- Walls from 2.5' to 4' in height: The Department *may* require retaining walls to be designed and plans endorsed by an Architect, Landscape Architect, or Professional Engineer, *depending* on specific site conditions. Determination will be made at time of application. (107-340)(e)
- Retaining walls that separate land from bodies of water: Regardless of height, walls separating land from bodies of water must adhere to the requirements of this article. All such retaining walls must obtain a permit from the Community Development Services. (107-339)(b)
- Walls in excess of 4' in height: Walls in this height range *must* be designed and plans stamped and endorsed by a Professional Engineer.(107-340)(f)(1)
- Wall in excess of 10' in height: In addition to walls in excess of 4', a geotechnical report must be submitted that has been stamped and endorsed by a Professional Engineer.(107-340)(f)(3)

<b>GENERAL DESIGN REQUIREMENTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Prohibited Materials:</u> Walls that will come in contact with bodies of water <i>may not</i> be constructed of treated wood or railroad ties. (107-340)(d)</li> <li>▪ <u>Slopes:</u> Slopes of 1:1 or steeper will be treated as a retaining wall and comply with the regulations. (107-340)(a)</li> <li>▪ <u>Drainage:</u> All walls must provide a means of alleviating hydrostatic pressure and provide a means of water conveyance. (107-340)(c)</li> <li>▪ <u>Safety Railings:</u> Railings <i>may</i> be required for walls 2.5' or more in height, depending on specific site conditions and applicable building codes. (107-340)(b)</li> </ul>
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<b>QUESTIONS?</b>	<p><b>Community Development Services Department</b>          616 W. Lancashire Blvd.          Bella Vista, Arkansas 72715          (479) 268-4980</p>
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<b>SEAWALL</b> (107-340)(g)	Minimum Elevations for Retaining Walls Separating Land from Bodies of Water:	<b>Water Body</b>	<b>Normal Pool Elevation</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Retaining walls that separate land from bodies of water must maintain a minimum elevation of twenty-four (24) inches above normal pool elevation. (107-340)(g)(2)</li> <li>▪ Uneven walls will have twenty-four (24) inches minimum averaged from several points along the entire length. (107-340)(g)(3)</li> <li>▪ See Permit Submittal Requirements and Inspection Closeout sections for more information."</li> </ul>	Loch Lomond	1120
		Lake Avalon	1075
		Lake Windsor	1069
		Lake Norwood	1060
		Lake Ann	1055
		Lake Rayburn	1090
		Lake Brittany	1200

<b>LOCATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Walls must be located outside of the public right-of-way. (107-342)(a)</li> <li>▪ Walls must be located on private property and shall not encroach on neighboring properties. <i>It is the contractor and/or property owner responsibility to correctly locate property boundaries.</i> (107-342)(b)</li> <li>▪ Walls located near street intersections must be located outside of the sight distance triangle. (107-342)(c)</li> <li>▪ <u>Easements:</u> (107-342)(d)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Utility Easements:</u> Walls <i>can not</i> restrict access to utilities. If utilities are not present and where such location/action is approved by all utility companies, walls may be placed within the easement. (107-342)(d)(1)</li> <li>• <u>Drainage Easements:</u> Walls <i>cannot</i> impede the normal flow of storm water or cross drainage channels. Placement of walls in drainage easements will be on a case by case basis. (107-342)(d)(2)</li> <li>• <u>Access Easements:</u> Walls <i>may not</i> be constructed over a public or private access easement. (107-342)(d)(3)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <u>Setbacks:</u> (107-342)(e)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>From Structures:</u> Walls must be placed 10' or 1.5 times the height of the wall, whichever is greater, away from existing or proposed structures. (107-342)(e)(1)</li> <li>• <u>From Property Lines:</u> Walls shall be placed a minimum of 7.5' or 1.5 times the height of the wall, whichever is greater, away from property lines. (107-342)(e)(2)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Walls <i>may not</i> be placed over an existing or proposed septic drain field or any closer than 10 feet in any direction of a septic leach field. (107-342)(f)</li> <li>▪ If walls are terraced, the upper wall can be located no closer to the lower wall than 1 times the height of the tallest wall. (107-342)(g)</li> </ul>
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<b>INSPECTION CLOSEOUT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Walls from 2.5' to 4' in height:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Inspection:</u> The applicant is responsible for contacting the Community Development Services Department prior to construction to request a footing inspection, and upon completion to request a final inspection. (107-340)(e)(1)</li> <li>• <u>Close Out:</u> If the wall is constructed in accordance with the regulations and submitted permit materials, a Certificate of Completion will be issued. Otherwise, the Building Inspector will prepare an inspection report detailing the deficiencies. (107-340)(e)(2)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <u>Walls in excess of 4' in height:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Inspection:</u> Walls shall be field inspected by the design engineer for plan compliance. (107-340)(f)(1)</li> <li>• <u>Close Out:</u> Upon completion, the design engineer shall file a certification letter with the Community Development Services Department stating that all code and plan requirements have been fulfilled. (107-340)(f)(2)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <u>Walls next to water bodies:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Inspection:</u> At final inspection the Community Development Services Department will measure height of wall with a GPS unit. (107-340)(g)(3)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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