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ONLINE INFORMATION
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This Assistance Bulletin only applies to property within unincorporated Snohomish County and does not apply to property within incorporated city limits.

Fences

6

Revised September 2019

WWW.SNOCO.ORG

Keyword: Assistance Bulletins

Q: Do I need a permit to build a fence?

A: Not if your fence is eight feet high or less. Except in flood hazard areas and critical areas since the fence will still need to meet all other code requirements including those for flood hazard and critical areas and their buffers.

Q: How close to the property line can I place my fence?

A: If your fence is six feet high or less, you may place your fence up to the property line if the following requirements are met:

- (1) All fences and freestanding walls on corner lots must meet the vision clearance requirements of SCC 30.23.100.
- (2) Where a fence is built on top of a retaining wall, fence height shall be measured on the up hill side.
- (3) Up to three strands of wire are allowed on top of fences six feet or less in height.
- (4) Fences and freestanding walls six feet or less in height shall be set back the width of any required landscaped area, or where no landscaped area is required, may be allowed without a setback in any required front, side, or rear yard.
- (5) An open wire mesh or similar type fence may be erected in excess of the maximum heights permitted in this section on the periphery of play grounds associated with private and public schools and parks, public facilities, industrial and commercial uses, transmitter and transformer sites, and government installations where security or public safety is required.
- (6) Site-obscuring fences and freestanding walls in excess of six feet shall meet the required building setback or the width of any required or approved landscaped area if less than the required building setback.

Q: How do I measure my fence height?

A: The height is measured from its top surface, board, rail or wire to the ground. Where a fence is built on top of a retaining wall, fence height must be measured on the up-hill side. Up to three strands of wire are allowed on top of fences six feet or less in height.

Q: Are the regulations any different for a corner lot?

A: Yes. All corner lots must maintain, for safety (vision) purposes, a triangular area free of trees, fences, shrubs and other physical obstructions higher than 42 inches above the established street grade. (When the sides forming the street corner angle measure 40 feet or less, no fences or freestanding walls more than 4 feet in height are permitted within the area comprising the triangle.) See the illustration—**Corner Lot Sight Clearance**—on the following page.

This bulletin is intended only as an information guide. The information may not be complete and is subject to change. For complete legal information, refer to Snohomish County Code.

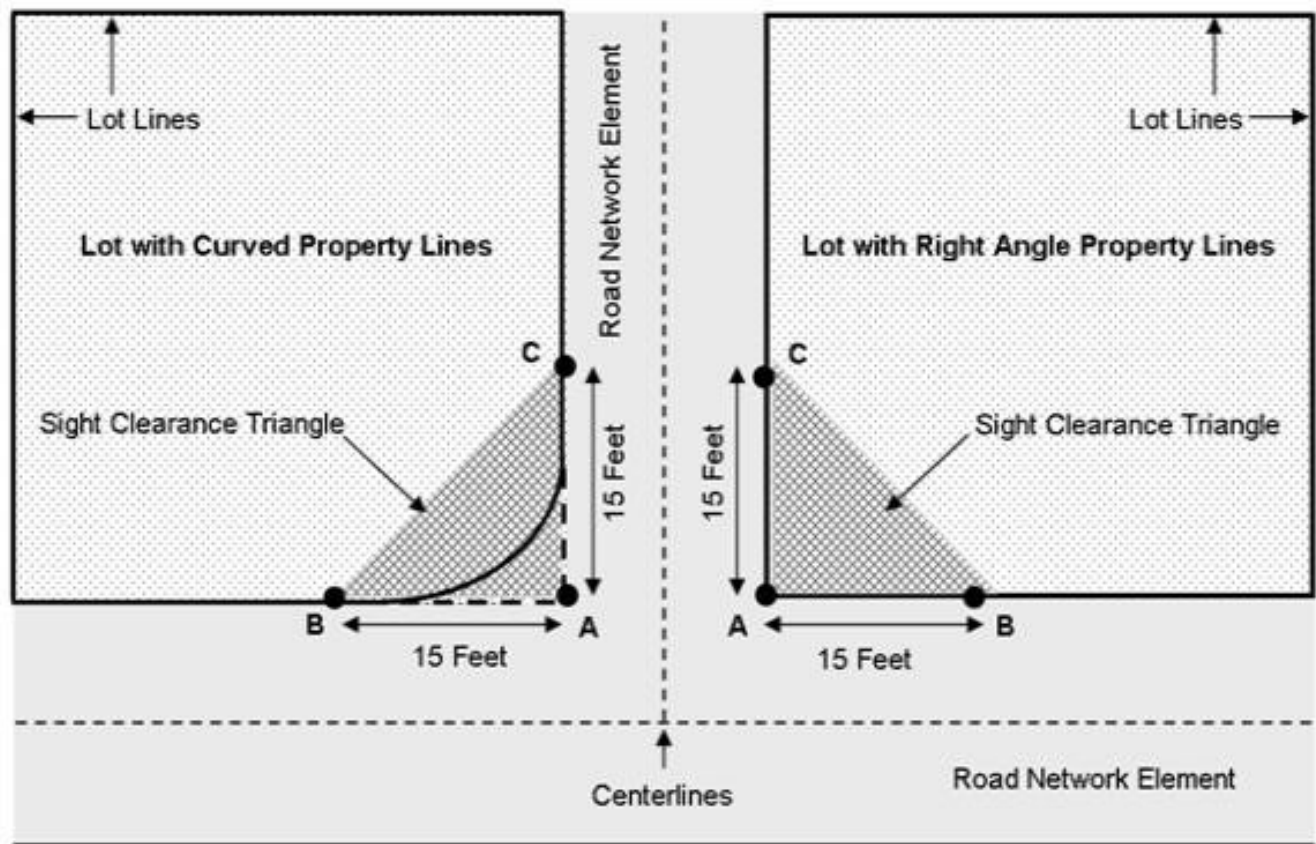
Q: What if my fence is going to be built as part of a commercial or public facility?

A: Open wire mesh or similar type fence may be erected higher than the maximum heights permitted around playgrounds at private schools and parks, public facilities, industrial and commercial uses, transmitter and transformer sites, or government installations where security or public safety are required. (See SCC 30.28.040)

Q: Does a fence in excess of 8' in height require an engineered design?

A: We have provided a prescriptive path for fences up to 8' in height in Table 1.

CORNER LOT SIGHT CLEARANCE TRIANGLE SCC 30.23.100(1)



Q: How big and at what spacing do the footings, posts, and rails need to be?

A: The detail in these plans will help you determine how big the footings, post, and deck rails need to be and how far apart they can be spaced. (See Table 1.)

General Notes

1. All posts shall be grade #2, Hem-Fir or better that has been pressure treated (to resist insect and dry rot) in accordance with American Wood-Preservers' Association Standards (Category). Fence rail lumber shall be grade #2 Douglas-Fir, Hem-Fir or better that has been pressure treated (to resist insect and dry rot) in accordance with American Wood-Preservers' Association Standards. The pressure-treatment category identified below will be identified on the lumber. The level of treatment depends on the use as follows;
 - a. Fence railings must be treated to a Category UC3B.
 - b. Posts and other woods located on, in, or in contact with the ground must be a Category UC3B.
2. The level of preservative treatment is noted on the tags fixed to the ends of the wood members. Remember, any time you make a cut, treat the cut end of the wood with a paint-on preservative. Cut ends expose the inner untreated wood to potential moisture and insect damage.
3. Fence boards can be of any material and configuration designed to resist wind and span.
4. All nails shall be "common" or "box" galvanized. It is recommended that "common" nails be used. They have a thicker shank and are stronger than "box" nails.
5. New pressure treatment methods use chemicals that will prematurely corrode standard fasteners and hardware when in contact with pressure treated lumber; and as a result, fastener and hardware requirements have changed. Note the following:
 - a. All screws and nails shall be hot-dipped galvanized or stainless steel.
 - b. All hardware (fence rail hangers, gate hardware, etc.) shall be galvanized with 1.85 oz/sf of zinc (G-185 coating) or shall be stainless steel. Look for products such as "Zmax" from Simpson Strong-Tie or "Triple Zinc" from USP.
6. Concrete used for footings must have a minimum compressive strength of 2,500 psi.
7. Fences constructed according to this handout are not designed to support any other structure or retain any earth or rock.
8. Fence designs that deviate from the conditions of this handout will require a specific plan submission and may require engineering.
9. Inspections are required as follows:
 - a. A footing (post hole), framing, and a final inspection are required on all fences. To determine the fence is located correctly, property pins must be located and visible at the time of inspection. If the property pins cannot be found, then they must be located and marked by a registered professional Land Surveyor.
 - b. Footing inspections are required prior to the placement of concrete.
 - c. Framing and final inspections may be combined if all portions of the fence framing and mechanical attachments are completed.
 - d. It is the responsibility of the permit holder or the permit holder's representative to notify the county when stages of construction are reached that require an inspection.
10. The sizing for footings, posts, and rails are only to be used as indicated in Table 1.
11. If the fence is located adjacent to the top of a retaining wall, the fence must be set back a distance equal to the depth of the fence footing or the retaining wall must be designed (engineered) to support the loads imposed by the fence.
12. These details cannot be used for fences on ground that slopes (perpendicular to the fence) greater than 2 horizontal for every 1 vertical.

TABLE 1
FENCE POST, FOOTING SIZE AND DEPTH
(All posts are spaced a maximum of 8'-0" o.c.)

Posts must be embedded to within six inches of the bottom of the footing.

1) If you have a fence height that is:	Then, 2) You need this many/size fence rails:	And, 3) The post must have a minimum nominal size of dimension of (w x d):	And, 4) The footings supporting the posts will need a minimum depth (feet) and diameter (inches) of :
Up to 7 feet high No permit required	(2) 2x6	4x4	4'-0" deep x 12" diameter Or 3'-9" deep x 16" diameter Or 3'-6" deep x 18" diameter
7 - 8 feet high Permit required	(4) 2x6	4x6 (the six-inch dimension must be perpendicular to the fence face)	4'-6" deep x 18" diameter