

5.37-1 Fence Regulations (Amended – Ordinance 1598 – 12/23/12)

A. Intent: The intent of this section is to provide reasonable regulations for fence installation while allowing property owners the ability to install a fence for aesthetic, screening, separating or security purposes.

B. Definitions:

1. *Board-on-board fence*: shall mean any fence with alternating vertical boards over horizontal structures that give the fence a finished look on both sides.



Photo 1, Board on Board

2. *Chain-link or cyclone fence*: shall mean any fence that is constructed of some type of woven wire fence, with a minimum 11 ½ gauge in residential districts and a minimum 9 gauge in non-residential districts.



Photo 2, Vinyl Coated Chain Link

3. *Decorative fence*: shall mean any fence no more than 30 inches high and no more than 16 ft in length, which are not intended for the purpose of preventing persons and/or domestic animals, from crawling or passing through the fence, except at established gateways. A *decorative fence* shall not include a fence constructed of chain link material or any other type of woven fence.

4. *Fence*: shall mean a structure serving as an enclosure, barrier or boundary including but not limited to posts, boards, wire, vinyl or gates.



Photo 1, Decorative Picket Fence



Photo 4, Decorative Split Rail Fence

5. *Fence Height:* The height of the fence will be measured at the *Grade* (See F-2). If the ground is not entirely level, then the grade shall be determined by computing the average elevation of the ground for each linear section of fence and taking the average of said total averages.

6. *Lattice:* shall mean an open framework made of strips of wood or similar material overlapped or overlaid in a regular crisscross or decorative pattern. Lattice sections may not exceed one foot in height and shall not exceed 50 % (percent) coverage of open viewing.



Photo 2, Lattice Top

7. *Living Fence or Landscape Fence:* A living fence or landscape fence includes a row of shrubs, hedgerows, landscape berms or similar for the purpose of enclosure, screening, or restricting the passage of air, noise or light; but shall not impede surrounding line of sight or corner clearance (clear vision zones).



Photo 3, Living Fence

8. *Ornamental fence:* Wrought iron, tubular aluminum or similar *ornamental fence*.



Photo 4, Ornamental Fence

9. *Picket fence:* shall mean any fence with in-line boards no larger than one inch x three inches with gaps equal to the width of the boards.



Photo 5, Picket Fence

10. *Privacy screen*: shall mean a sight-obscuring fence, erected adjacent to or around a selected use or area (such as a patio, deck, courtyard or swimming pool), designed to screen the area behind it from observation by persons outside its perimeter.
11. *Semi-privacy fence*: shall mean a fence designed and intended to be sight-obscuring, such as a *Board-on-Board fence*.
12. *Shadow-box fence*: see *Board-on-Board fence*.
13. *Solid fence*: Any fence that presents a solid surface without any gaps in materials.
14. *Wall*: See wall requirements Sections 5.33-5.37



Photo 6, Vinyl Fence Privacy Screen

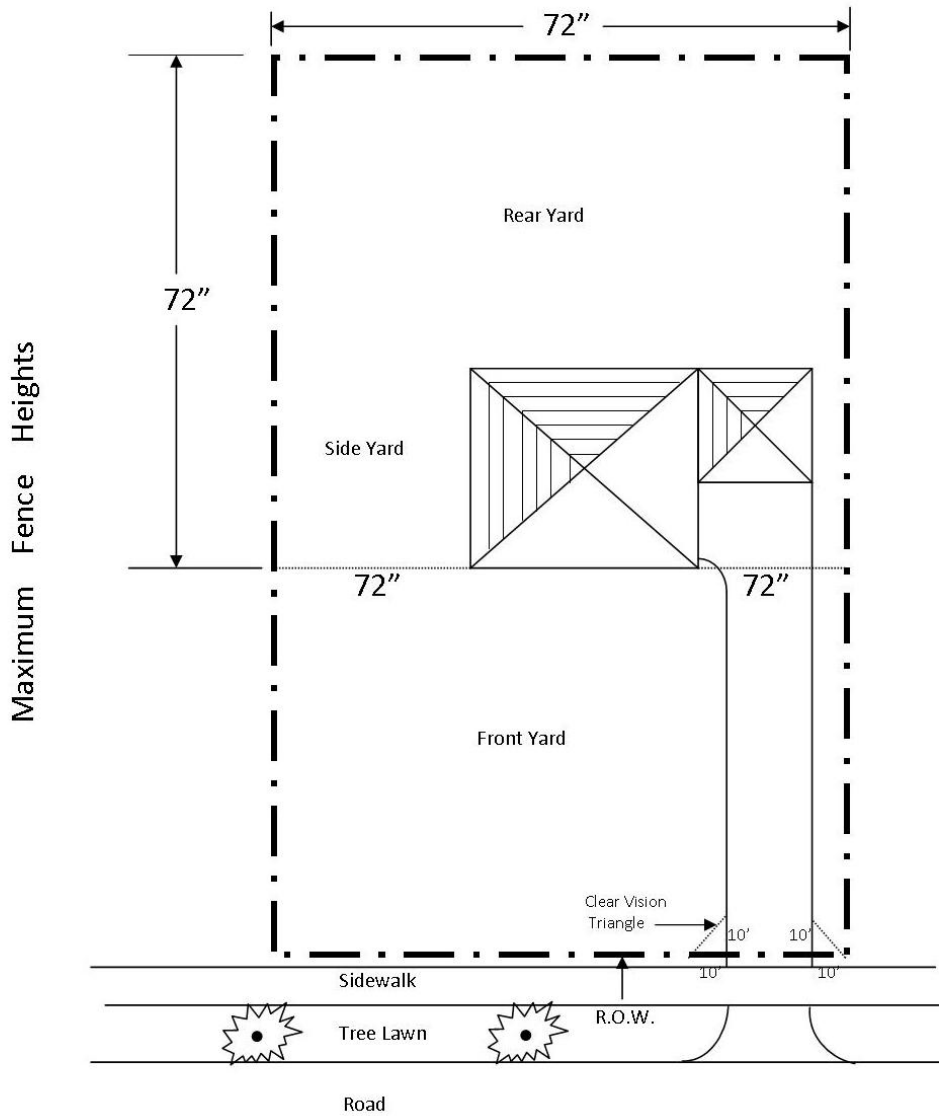
C. Standards for Approval:

1. Residential Districts: Residential fences (R-A, R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, & R-E) are subject to an application to the Building Department and the following requirements:
 - (a) Front Yard: Not permitted, unless it meets the definition of *Decorative Fence* or *Living Fence*.
 - (b) Side Yard: Fences, not exceeding seventy-two inches (72”), shall not extend toward the front of the lot nearer than the front of the house (see F-1).
 - (c) Rear Yard: Fences shall not exceed seventy-two inches (72”) in the rear yard (see F-1).
 - (d) Double Frontage Yards: On corner lots where a double front setback is required, and where there is a common rear yard relationship with a lot in the same block, a fence no greater than 72” in height may be installed along the common street line from the side of the house to the rear property line. Clear vision zones shall be maintained for corner lots and adjacent driveways.
 - (e) Decorative Fencing: Decorative fencing (e.g. split rail, white picket, etc.), which is less than 30” high and less than sixteen feet (16’) in length when erected as part of landscaping does not require a permit (see F-3).
 - (f) *Living Fences* shall meet the requirements for clear vision triangles.
 - (g) Permitted Materials: Wood, wrought iron, tubular aluminum, vinyl coated chain link, aluminum, quality vinyl and other approved quality materials. Wood fences shall be pressure treated, painted or stained. Board-on-board, shadow-box and semi-privacy fence styles may include a one foot high lattice top (see Photo 5). Naturally water resistant woods (i.e. teak, redwood, cedar) may be permitted. Vinyl coated chain link fences may be permitted in the rear and side yards.
 - (h) The finish side of the fence shall face out towards adjacent residential lots and public Rights-of Way.

- (i) Prohibited Fences: Stockade, uncoated chain link and slats (i.e. vinyl, aluminum, etc.) inserted into chain link or cyclone fences. Fences shall not contain barb wire, razor wire, electric current or charge of electricity. Exception: Farms, permitted in the Single Family Residence districts (R-A, R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-E), may contain these type fences after approval by the ZBA.
 - (j) All fences shall be supported from its own structural frame system of posts and rails and not attached, connected, secured or supported by other fencing, trees, etc. in the area. Fences shall be installed in a professional manner and be plumb, straight, and true, and stepped or tapered or cut to follow the contour of the land.
 - (k) Dog Runs shall be located in the rear and side yards only and shall be consistent with the requirements for residential fences.
 - (l) Electronic Pet Fence: Refer to Ordinance No. 1576 (Enacted 6/7/10)
2. Non-Residential Districts: Non-residential fences and multi-family residential are subject to the following requirements:
- (a) A permit shall be required prior to the construction of any fence, after Administrative approval is granted by the City Planner. Administrative approval may not be required if the fence is approved as part of a site plan approval.
 - (b) Fences, not to exceed six (6) feet in height, may be located within any yard except the minimum front yard setback or the minimum setback of a yard abutting a street. Fences above six (6) feet in height may be requested through the Zoning Board of Appeals. Front yard setback requirements may be waived in the City Centre and DDA districts if *Ornamental Fencing* is installed.
 - (c) Chain link fences shall be vinyl coated.
 - (d) Barb wire or other pointed materials may be used only in industrially zoned districts provided said material is over seven (7) feet above the ground and any projections at the top shall be over the fence owner's property and shall not overhang onto abutting property (see F-4).
- D. Survey: The City may require the owner of the property upon which a fence is to be constructed to establish property lines upon said property through the placing of permanent stakes by a licensed surveyor. Such property lines shall be established before such fence is erected. A survey may also be required in the event an abutting property owner disputes the permit applicant's determination of a stated property line.
- E. Maintenance: All fences shall be maintained in good, safe and stable condition in accordance with local ordinances and codes. Rotten, broken or missing components shall be replaced or repaired immediately. Fences shall be made from naturally water resistant material or be pressure treated, stained, painted, or vinyl coated and kept in a good aesthetic condition.
- F. For pool enclosures and construction fencing see the Michigan Residential Code and/or the Michigan Building Code.

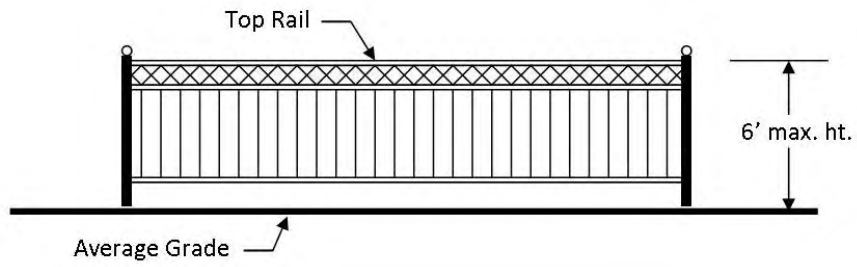
F-1, RESIDENTIAL REAR & SIDE YARD FENCE REGULATIONS

CITY OF SOUTHFIELD, MI



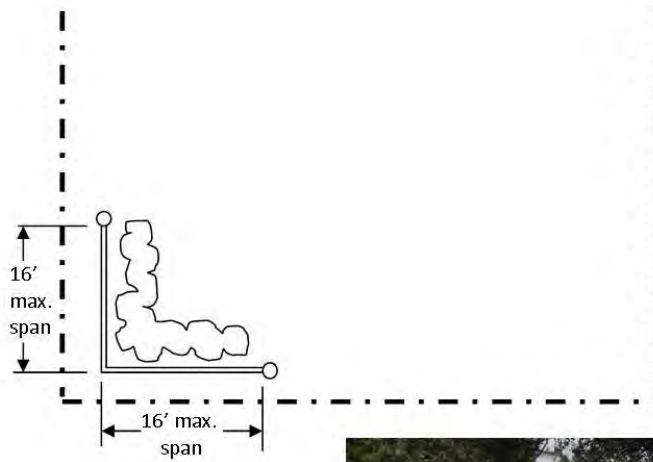
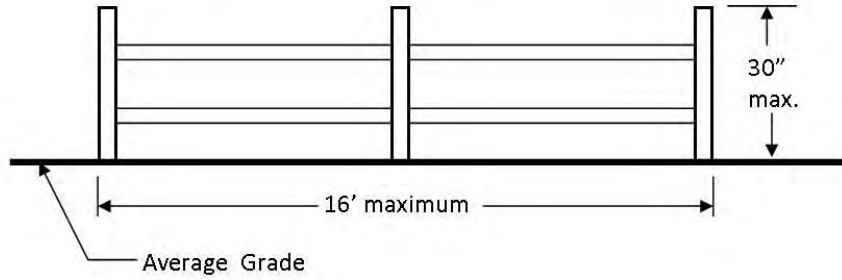
F-2, How To Measure The Height Of Fence

Not to Scale



F-3, Maximum Span Between Posts *Decorative Fencing*

Not to Scale

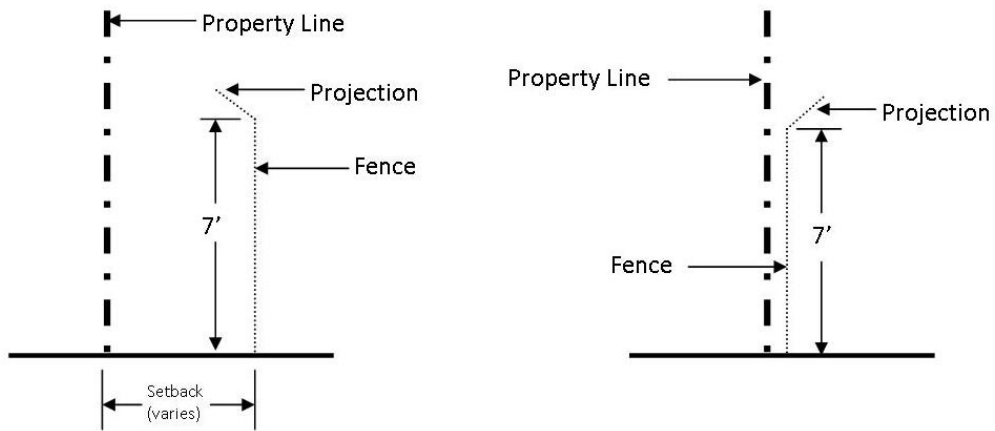


Plan View



F-4, Barbed Wire or Razor Fence Detail

Not to Scale



Barb wire or other pointed materials may be used provided said material is over seven (7) feet above ground and any projections at the top shall be over the fence owner's property and shall not overhang onto abutting property.