

Fence Guidelines – City of Forest Lake

What is the process if I want to install a fence on my property?

Fences in all districts require a Certificate of Compliance obtained from the Community Development Department. A Certificate of Compliance is necessary to ensure that fences are properly placed meeting setback requirements and not placed in street right of ways, drainage and/or utility easements, etc. If a fence is proposed where a property line is not clearly defined, a survey of your property is required to establish the location of property lines. No fence can be constructed on public right-of-ways.

Where can I place a fence on my property?

In general terms, the placement of fences is usually determined by the height of the proposed fence(s) although other conditions may apply. The following regulations apply to fence heights:

- Fences four (4) feet in height and less may be placed anywhere on a lot provided they comply with traffic visibility requirements as described here ([link to Traffic Visibility Triangle](#)).
- Fences between four (4) and six (6) feet in height may be placed anywhere on a lot but not in a required front yard.
- Fences over six (6) feet in height require a Building Permit and must conform to all setback and yard regulations in the same manner as building walls, unless located in a commercial or industrial zoning district and approved by a Conditional Use Permit.
- Fences on properties next to lakes and wetlands may not be placed within setback requirements for lakes and wetlands. For general development lakes, including Forest and Clear Lakes, fences may not be within fifty (50) feet of the Ordinary High Water Line unless the existing home is located closer to the lake than the required setback, in which case the fence may be constructed even with the lake side of the home.

(Note: Fence height is measured from the fence owner's yard grade to the top of the fence.)

Traffic Visibility (also link from above)

On a corner lot, no fence or landscaping can be placed in such a manner that poses a danger to traffic or obscures the view of approaching vehicular traffic or pedestrians. Visibility of vehicular traffic and pedestrians must be unobstructed between a height of three (3) and ten (10) feet above the center line grades of the intersecting driveways and/or streets, within a triangular area described as follows: beginning at the intersection of the edge, an intersecting driveway, and/or curb line of an intersecting street right-of-way, thence to a point thirty (30) feet along the edge of the intersecting driveway or curb line, thence diagonally to a point thirty (30) feet from the point of beginning on the curb line of the intersecting street right-of-way.

Are there any other fence regulations if I want to place a fence along a property line?

Fences may only be placed along a property line provided no physical damage of any kind results to the adjacent property.

Fences on or within three (3) feet of the property line must give consideration to the maintenance of the fence and yard.

Fences cannot restrict drainage.

Solid wall style fences must be placed a minimum of four (4) inches above finish grade to not impede site drainage.

A solid wall style fence may exceed its allowable height by four (4) inches to facilitate drainage. The finished side of fences must face adjacent property.