



FENCE REGULATIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

What is a Fence?

A fence is any wooden, metal or masonry structure, other than a retaining wall, used to enclose, to screen, or to mark a boundary. It may be constructed of wood, concrete block or other materials.

There are three reasons why the City of Half Moon Bay regulates the height and location of fences.

- To allow privacy and security for single-family homes and properties;
- To maintain an open feeling in neighborhoods when viewed from the street;
- To eliminate visual barriers for the safety of pedestrians and drivers, particularly at street corners and driveway locations. (Chapter 18.06 of the Zoning Code)

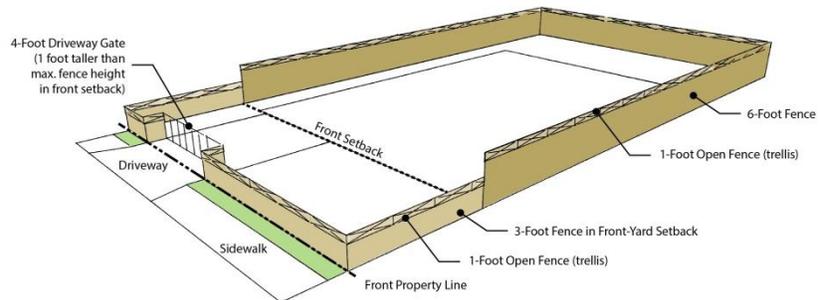
Where Can Fences be Located?

Fences can be located anywhere on your property. However, the allowed maximum height is less in the required front yard setback or site distance area.

What is the Height Limit for a Fence?

Front Yard and Site Distance

Area: Solid fences, walls & hedges within the front yard setback or within the site distance area can be **no taller than 3 feet**. Contact Planning staff to determine the front yard setback applicable to your property.



Outside the Front Yard and Site Distance Area. Solid fences, walls, and hedges located outside the required front setback and site distance areas are limited to a **maximum height of 6 feet**; however, one additional foot of lattice is permitted, provided openings comprise at least 50% of the lattice area.



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Retaining Wall Fence. Where a retaining wall protects a cut below existing grade or contains a fill above the existing grade and is located on the line separating lots, such retaining wall may be topped by a fence, wall or hedge with the **maximum total fence height not to exceed 6 feet.**

Driveway Gates. Decorative gates may extend up to **1 foot higher** than the fence height permitted in that location.

How Can I Determine Where My Property Lines Are Located?

Fences are usually located on the side and rear property lines. A look at your final subdivision map or assessor's parcel map (available at the counter at City Hall or the County of San Mateo's website) will provide you with your property dimensions that may help determine the location of property lines. If your measurements on the ground are not the same as the dimensions shown on the assessor's parcel map or subdivision map, or if an adjacent neighbor has questioned the existing or proposed fence location, you may want to hire a licensed land surveyor to determine the exact location of your property lines.

It is important to note that your front property line is generally not located at the inside line of the sidewalk. City street right-of-way often extends between 2 and 10 feet behind the sidewalk, typically including areas you landscape and consider part of your front yard. In locating new fences, it is very important to find out where the front property line is located. An encroachment permit maybe required through Public Works for any changes within the public right-of-way.

How is the Height of a Fence Measured?

Height is measured vertically from the natural or finished existing grade, whichever is lower at the base of the fence, wall, or hedge to the top of the fence, wall, or hedge above the grade.

Do I Need Permits to Build a Fence?

If your property is not located within a sensitive habitat and the new fence is not within the public right-of-way, no permits are needed for new fences that comply with the fence requirements identified in this handout.