



Retaining Wall Process

DETERMINE WHETHER PERMITS ARE REQUIRED

Applicant plans to construct a retaining wall -- check definition in IBC or IRC to determine whether building permit is required for the wall.

To verify cut/fill restrictions, check LDC Section 25-8-341 and 25-8-342.

For further information, contact the Development Assistance Center at 974-6370.

If so, a separate building permit may be required for wall. Does the project meet the description of a site plan exemption? (LDC 25-5-2)

If not, there is no city process.

SITE PLAN PROCESS

If yes, apply for site plan exemption.

If no, include wall design in required site plan application.

PROCESS IS DEPENDENT ON THE LOCATION OF PROPOSED WALL

- Wall to be located on a single lot, not in or impacting ROW or easements nor part of a water quality or detention facility
- Wall to be located on a single lot and potentially impacting ROW (full-purpose) or public easements (in full-purpose and ETJ)
- Wall to be located on a single lot, not in or impacting ROW or easements nor part of a water quality or detention facility
- Wall integral to a water quality or detention facility (NOT in a public easement)
- Wall to be located on multiple lots
- Wall to be located in or potentially impacting ROW (full-purpose) or public easements (in full-purpose and ETJ)
- Wall integral to a proposed building
- Wall to be located in the City of Austin ETJ

INFORMATION AND REVIEW REQUIRED

- Site plan exemption granted by DAC. Structural plans and details are required to be included in your site plan exemption submittal.
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- Include structural plans and details for wall in site plan application. Plans reviewed by LUR drainage engineers.
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- Show location of building on site plan, but retaining wall (if part of a building) is not permitted with site development permit.
- Include structural plans and details for wall in site plan or subdivision construction plan set. Plans reviewed by LUR drainage engineers.

BUILDING PERMIT PROCESS

- Apply for building permit
- Apply for building permit for each affected address
- Building permits are not required for work in ROW. In public easements, a building permit may be required depending on who maintains the structure.
- Include structural plans and details for wall in building permit (for building) application.
- No building permit required

INSPECTION

- *Third-party engineer's inspection report required to close permit
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- Only location / size of wall inspected by environmental inspectors but not inspected for structural requirements. *Third-party inspection report required to close permit.
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- Wall inspected by Site/Subdivision Inspectors or *third-party engineer's inspection report required to close permit.
- *Third-party engineer's inspection report required to close permit
- If wall is integral to drainage facility, the location and size of wall is inspected by environmental inspectors.

NOTE: For additional information regarding retaining walls in ROW, please refer to Sec. 11-STRUCTURES IN ROW AND EASEMENT of the TCM.

For projects in the ETJ, please contact the county for permitting information.

* A survey may be required to ensure there are no encroachments into easements, required setbacks or the ROW.

| Acronyms | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| ROW – Right of Way | ETJ – Extraterritorial Jurisdiction |
| LUR – Land Use Review | TCM – Transportation Criteria Manual |
| IBC – International Building Code | IRC – International Residential Code |
| LDC – Land Development Code | DAC – Development Assistance Center |
| QSMD - Quality and Standards Management Division | |

DEFINITIONS

Retaining wall: a structure used to support a soil or rock embankment or slope in a vertical or near-vertical configuration in which it would otherwise be unstable because of gravitational forces or applied loads. [TCM 11.3.1(J)] Retaining walls, regardless of type or height, must be designed by engineers licensed in the State of Texas, using current industry standards and accepted engineering practices. [TCM 11.3.3] All engineering plans and details submitted to the City for review must be sealed and signed by a PE.

IBC § 105.2 (2009 edition): Retaining walls that are not over 4 feet (1219 mm) in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge or impounding Class I, II or IIIA liquids are exempt from the permit requirements of the City.

IRC § 105.2 (2006 edition): Retaining walls that are not over 4 feet (1219 mm) in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge are exempt from the permit requirements of the City.

Surcharge: To fill to excess or beyond normal capacity [Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, © 1974]; A surface loading in addition to the soil load behind a retaining wall. [Definitions of Engineering Terms, Talal Ahmed Kamal, © 1992]