

RESIDENTIAL FENCES

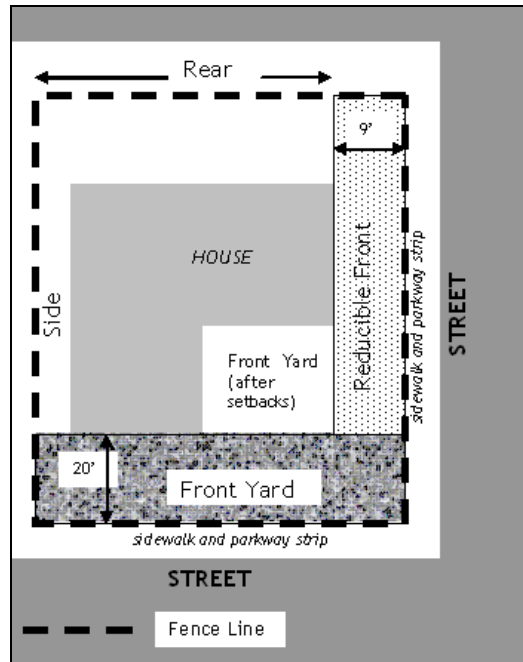
To promote attractive and safe neighborhoods, Planning and Building permits may be required for new or replacement fences. For additional information, see SMC 19.48.

The Planning Division reviews fences for location, material, and design standards. The Building Division reviews fences for safe construction. Lattice is included in the total fence height. For planning permit purposes, height is measured from highest adjoining grade, or from the top of nearest curb if in the front or reducible front yard. For building permit purposes, fence height is measured from the lowest adjoining grade.

FRONT YARD FENCES

A front yard fence is defined as being between the face of the building and the street. Corner lots have a second front yard (called a reducible front yard) along the longer of the two street frontages. No fences or other obstructions may be over 3.5 feet high in a driveway or corner vision triangle (see reverse).

If the sidewalk is adjacent to the curb, the fence can be built to the property line (typically 11 feet back from the curb edge, or 5.5 feet from the sidewalk edge). If there is a landscape strip between the sidewalk and the curb, fences may be built to the edge of the sidewalk (see sidebar).



FENCES ADJACENT TO THE SIDEWALK

Fence located in the public right-of-way may need to be removed if the City requires access to the right of way.

HEDGES

Hedges and other natural or structural objects are subject to the height restrictions for the front yard or reducible front yard.

VISION TRIANGLES

Vision triangles are located at the intersections of driveways and sidewalks and street intersections for pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle safety. Fences may not exceed 3.5 feet in any vision triangle. See reverse for diagrams showing locations of vision triangles.

HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION

If your property is part of a Homeowner's Association, review the CC&Rs and consult with the Homeowner's Association for any additional restrictions.

RETAINING WALLS

Retaining walls less than 4 feet (from base of footing to top) do not require a permit. Regardless of height, if a fence is located on top of a retaining wall, a building permit is

Fences within Front Yards (between face of building and street)

| Fence Height* | Review Process |
|---------------|--|
| Up to 4 feet | No permit required. Fence may not exceed 3.5 ft. in any vision triangles unless it is an "open fence." (see reverse) |
| 4+ to 6 feet | MPP |
| Over 6 feet | Use Permit required. A building permit is required for fences over 7 feet tall. |

* For Planning permits, front yard fence height is measured from the top of the nearest curb.

Fences on Corner Lots in Required Reducible Front Yards

| Fence Height* | Review Process |
|---------------|---|
| Up to 6 feet | No permit required |
| 6+ to 8 feet | No planning permit is required if the fence is set back 2 feet from the property line for every foot in height above 6 feet (i.e. a 7 foot high fence must be set back 2 feet). A MPP is required if the fence does not meet this requirement. A building permit is required for fences over 7 feet tall. |
| Over 8 feet | Use Permit and building permit required. |

* For Planning permits, front yard fence height is measured from the top of the nearest curb.

SIDE OR REAR YARD FENCES

Side and rear yard fences may be located on the property line or slightly adjacent. Either location requires the following review process.

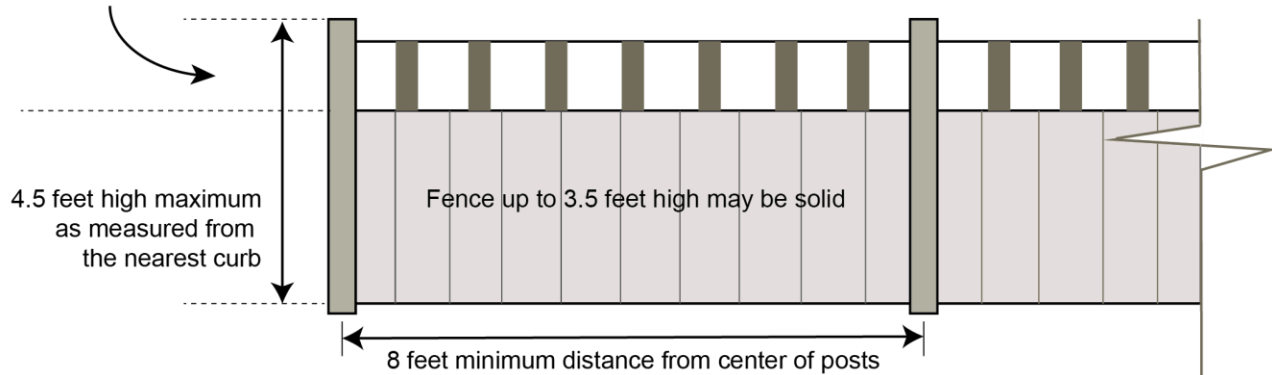
| Fence Height** | Review Process |
|----------------|--|
| Up to 8 feet | No planning permit required. A building permit is required |

| | |
|-------------|--|
| | for fences over 7 feet tall. |
| Over 8 feet | Use Permit and building permit required. |

required.

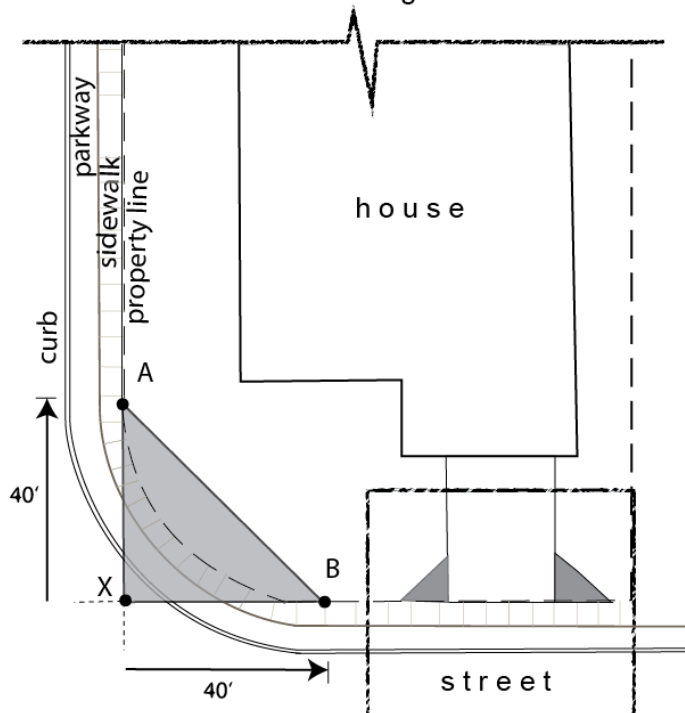
OPEN FENCE

The fence between 3.5 feet and 4.5 feet tall must be no more than 50% solid

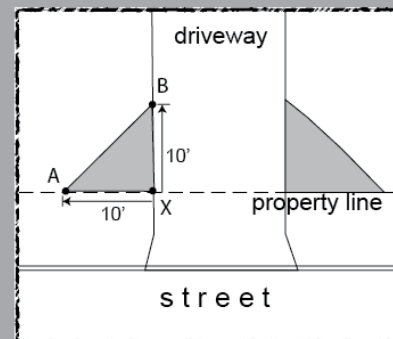


VISION TRIANGLES

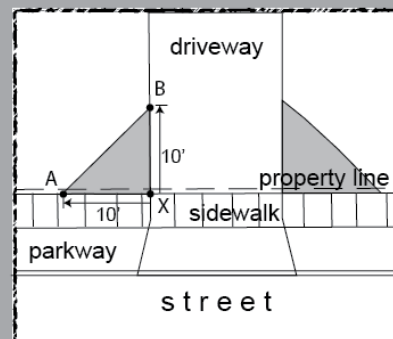
CORNER Vision Triangle



DRIVEWAY Vision Triangles



no sidewalk example



sidewalk example

PERMIT PROCESS

PLANNING DIVISION REVIEW

1. Ensure the fence is not located within the corner or driveway vision triangles.
2. Ensure the fence meets established design requirements and guidelines.
3. If required, submit an MPP application or Use Permit application for review.
4. The City will make a decision on the application.
5. If a permit was required, the decision may be appealed to the Planning Commission within 15 days of the decision date.

BUILDING PERMIT REVIEW

6. Upload plans at [E-OneStop Online Services](#).
7. To schedule an over-the-counter appointment, please email pcappointment@sunnyvale.ca.gov after you have uploaded your plans.

INSPECTIONS

8. Fence installations require two inspections; a post hole inspection that should be scheduled after the post holes are dug, and a final inspection after all the work is complete.
 - Note that fasteners used in preservative-treated wood shall be of hot dipped zinc-coated galvanized steel, stainless steel, silicon bronze or copper. (CBC 2304.10.6.1)

PLANNING REVIEW APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS (2 copies of each item unless noted otherwise)

- ☐ Application signed by the property owner (approval letter from the Homeowner's Association if applicable). (1 copy)
- ☐ Site plan showing the location of the property lines, existing building(s), and location of the proposed fence.
- ☐ Elevation drawings showing the proposed design, materials and height (from top of nearest curb if in the front or reducible front yard or highest adjoining grade if in the side or rear).
- ☐ Fee (non-refundable) _____

BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS (3 copies of each item unless noted otherwise)

- ☐ A completed Building Permit Worksheet application, available at the One-Stop Permit Center or on-line at www.Sunnyvale.ca.gov. (1 copy)
- ☐ An approval letter from the Homeowner's Association (if applicable).
- ☐ Site plan showing the location of the property lines, existing building(s), and location of the proposed fence. (3 copies)
- ☐ Provide construction details for the fence; structural calculations and details may be required.
- ☐ Fee (non-refundable) _____