



Retaining Wall Policy for Permits and Inspections of Retaining Walls Greater Than Four Feet in Height - Revised

The construction of large retaining walls is becoming more common in new subdivisions. The larger the wall, the more the risk of serious damage should the wall fail. Our staff is not currently equipped to manage the review and inspection these walls require to ensure the public health, safety and general welfare. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all retaining walls over four feet in height are designed and constructed properly.

1. BUILDING PERMITS

- A. All retaining walls over 4' in height require a building permit before construction. The building permit application will be submitted to the City of Prior Lake Building and Transportation Services Department.
- B. The permit application must be accompanied by a design certified by a registered engineer.
- C. The City will submit the plans to our consulting engineer for review. The applicant is responsible for the cost of this review. The fee will be collected with the building permit application.
- D. Once the City's consultant approves design, they will provide a cost estimate to complete the necessary inspections during the wall construction. This cost will be included with the building permit fee and paid at time the permit is issued.
- E. The contractor must coordinate the construction and inspections with the City's designated inspector. No construction may take place without the necessary inspections.
- F. Once construction is complete, the City's consultant will provide a letter stating the wall was constructed in accordance with the approved plans. At that time, the City will issue a certificate of completion.
- G. This policy applies to all retaining walls more than 4' in height, whether part of a large development or a single lot,

2. WALL CONSTRUCTED WITHOUT A PERMIT

Occasionally, we may learn of a retaining wall being constructed without the required permit. When that occurs:

- A. The City will issue an immediate "Stop Work" order.

- B. The contractor, property owner, or other responsible property owner must submit a building permit application to the City of Prior Lake Building and Transportation Services Department. The applicant will be charged an investigation fee in addition to the permit fee, as allowed in Section 401.300 of the City Code. The amount of the investigation fee shall be equal to the amount of the permit fee.
- C. The permit application must also be accompanied by a design certified by a registered engineer.
- D. The City will submit the plans to our consulting engineer for review. The applicant is responsible for payment of the cost of this review. The fee will be collected with the building permit application.
- E. Once the City's consultant approves design, the City and the City's consultant will work with the contractor, property owner or other party to determine what inspections may be required before work can begin again or before the wall is accepted as complete. The consultant will provide a cost estimate to complete the necessary inspections both before and during the wall construction. The applicant is responsible for these costs. This cost will be included with the building permit fee and paid at time the permit is issued.
- F. Once construction is allowed to begin again, the contractor must coordinate the construction and inspections with the City's designated inspector. No construction may take place without the necessary inspections.
- G. Once construction is complete, the City's consultant will provides a letter stating the wall was constructed in accordance with the approved plans. At that time, the City will issue a certificate of completion.

3. WALL COMPLETED WITHOUT PREREQUISITE INSPECTIONS

- A. If a permit has been secured for the construction of a retaining wall pursuant to this policy and work is undertaken or completed without proof on behalf or the owner, contractor, or property owner that all necessary inspections have been called for, taken place and approved, then and in that event the owner, contractor or property owner will be required to demonstrate to the city's satisfaction that all aspects of the design and construction were completed in accordance with the appropriate standards. The city reserves the right through its consultant to require that the wall be deconstructed in whole or in part to determine to its satisfaction that the wall is deemed safe. All costs for the deconstruction and subsequent reconstruction including inspection, administrative, and legal costs incurred by the city shall be paid by the owner, contractor or property owner.

This policy is effective immediately. This policy has been mailed to landscape contractors doing business within Prior Lake. The policy has also been published on the Prior Lake website and is available in paper at city hall. Questions and interpretations of the policy should be directed to Jane Kansier at 952-447-9812.