



**Boulder County  
Land Use Department  
Publications**

# Fence Requirements

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8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Mon., Wed., Thurs., Fri.  
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## Fence Requirements

This publication outlines the requirements for constructing fences in the unincorporated areas of Boulder County, not in cities or towns. Consult your local municipality for fence requirements if you reside in a city or town within Boulder County.

### General Permit Requirements

Building Permits are not required for fences 6 feet in height and under from existing grade (i.e., not on a berm or platform). However, fences of any height in the floodplain require a permit. See Standards for Fencing in a Floodplain on page 2.

Fences over 6 feet in height require a building permit for construction, and must meet setback requirements for the zoning district in which they are located. Fences over 6 feet may require plans for the footings and foundation that are prepared and stamped by a professional engineer. All fence components, including footings, must be on the fence owner's property. Fences are not allowed within the road right-of-way.

### Setback Requirements

Setback requirements vary by zoning district and road. To determine specific setback requirements for your parcel, please check with a planner at the Land Use Department by emailing [planner@bouldercounty.org](mailto:planner@bouldercounty.org) or calling 303-441-3930.

### Road Intersections

Fences of any height can not interfere with the sight triangle at intersections. The sight triangle varies based on the posted speed of the road. Please contact the Boulder County Transportation Department by emailing [transportation@bouldercounty.org](mailto:transportation@bouldercounty.org) or calling 303-441-3900.

### Easements

The county does not prohibit construction of fences in utility easements, but the fence installer and/or property owner assumes risk by doing so. Call the local utility companies for information on utility line locations. In addition, make sure that any fence in or adjacent to a storm drainage easement or swale does not impede the normal flow of stormwater.

### Wildlife Safe Fencing

Specific requirements for wildlife safe fencing might have been required through a Land Use review process (Site Plan Review, etc.). If your parcel has been through a Land Use review process, check the conditions of approval to see if there is a requirement for wildlife safe fencing.

### Covenants

Subdivisions may have provisions more restrictive than those above. Please check with your homeowners association and/or your subdivision's covenants prior to commencing construction. The county does not enforce subdivision covenants.

### Other Important Information

The term fence does not include retaining walls. Also, fences built around a developed use, such as a tennis court or outdoor eating area must meet other zoning, land use, and Building Code standards. Retaining walls and masonry fences must meet the structural design standards of the International Building Code.

**See Standards for Fencing in a Floodplain on Page 2:**

## Standards for Fencing in a Floodplain

Fences may be permitted in the floodplain depending on the type of fence and its use. In some cases, fencing is not permitted in the floodplain. Regardless of whether a building permit is necessary, any proposed fence in a 100-year floodplain requires issuance of a Floodplain Development Permit (FDP) from the Boulder County Transportation Department. See Section 1.k. of the General FDP for permitting of fences.

The following table is provided for assistance with understanding and selecting appropriate fencing in the floodplain:

Fence Type	Uses of Fencing Allowed		
	Flood Fringe	Floodway	Shallow Flooding Zone
Open barbed or barbless wire	Yes	Yes	Yes
Open pipe or rail fencing (i.e. corrals)	Yes	Yes, with limited cross fencing	Yes
Other wire, pipe, or rail fencing (i.e. field fence, welded wire)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Chain link	Case by case review	No	Yes
Solid wood fence	Case by case review	No	Yes, if elevated to or above the flood height, or adequate openings provided
Collapsible or breakaway fencing	Case by case review of design is required		

- Open barbed or barbless wire fencing shall have no more than one horizontal strand per foot of height and no more than one vertical wire or post every six feet. Horizontal wire strands may be placed below the flood height provided spacing is not closer than 6-inches apart. Vertical wire strands may be placed below the flood height provided spacing is not closer than 6-feet apart.
- Open pipe or rail fencing shall be 90% "open" and have posts placed no closer than 8-feet apart.
- Other wire, pipe, or rail fencing that is not considered "open" shall include minimum spacing not less than 6-inch x 6-inch square openings.
- Fencing perpendicular to predicted flood flows will be reviewed on a case by case basis.
- For more information or to inquire about a Floodplain Development Permit, please contact the Boulder County Transportation Department at [transportation@bouldercounty.org](mailto:transportation@bouldercounty.org) or 303-441-3900.

