



City of Freeport, Illinois

Community Development Department
524 W. Stephenson St. • Suite 330
Freeport, Illinois 61032
Phone (815) 235-8221
Facsimile (815) 599-5819

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
Alexander S. Mills

Fences - Frequently Asked Questions

What do I need to do to put up a fence?

First, check your zoning with the Community Development Department to ensure you are zoned residential. Then, fill out a fence permit application and submit it to the Community Development Department. The permit application requires you include basic information such as your name, address, the type and size of the fence you'd like to install, and a drawing, site plan or plat map showing property boundaries and structures. If you don't own the property where the fence is being installed, the written consent of the property owner(s) must be included with your application. Please keep in mind that you should not proceed with fence installation until your permit has been issued, in case there is additional information that needs to be provided on your part.

What if my property is zoned business, professional or manufacturing?

You will need to apply for a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals to install a fence on your property. Please contact the Community Development Department for information on applying for a variance.

Is the city responsible for my fence going in the right spot regarding property lines?

No, the person or entity applying for the fence permit is solely responsible for installing the fence within the boundaries of their property. This is a key reason why the Department requires accurate drawings, site plans or plats when you turn in your application – and at the discretion of the Community Development Director, the Department may require a survey if there are potential property line issues or concerns.

Can I put a fence in my front yard?

Yes. The height of your fence can't exceed four-feet in the front yard setback areas, there are restrictions on what materials your fence can be (see below), and you may not install a fence that is over three feet above the street grade within a vision clearance area of the lot. Also, keep in mind that a fence cannot be installed within two feet of a public sidewalk or a public right-of-way.

A fence being installed in a front yard must also have a setback equivalent to those of your neighbors that abut your property – meaning you have to match the setback, not install in front of or behind the neighboring fence.



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Can I put a fence in my rear/side yard?

Yes. The height of your fence can't exceed six-feet in the rear or side yard setback areas, there are restrictions on what materials your fence can be (see below), and you may not install a fence that is over three feet above the street grade within a vision clearance area of the lot.

Can I put a fence on a corner lot?

Yes. There are restrictions on what materials your fence can be (see below) and you may not install a fence that is over three feet above the street grade within a vision clearance area of the lot.

What materials can I use and not use?

If your fence is being installed in a side and/or rear yard, it may be brick, fieldstone, wrought iron, vinyl, chain link (nine gauge thickness and having a top rail), stockade, or board-on-board. Other appropriate types of fences may be considered as well.

If your fence is going in your front yard, it may only be split rail, wrought iron, or of a picket design. The front yard fence has to be at least 50% see-through as well. Chain link fences cannot be installed in front yards.

If your fence is going in on a corner lot, it may be only split rail, wrought iron, picket design or a decorative wood design. It does not have to be at least 50% see-through, and chain link fences cannot be installed in corner lot yards.

No fence can be made of used, discarded or 'junk' materials, including pallets, tree trunks, tires, trash, or other similar materials.

Can I install a fence on the property line?

If it is the rear or side property line, you may install the fence within two-feet of the property line as long as you have submitted a survey to the Community Development Department with your permit application. This is to show proof that you are aware of exactly where the property line is, and that you will not be installing the fence "over" the line on someone else's property.

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Can I install a fence on the property line (continued)?

Keep in mind that no matter where your fence is being installed, you cannot come within two feet of a public sidewalk or a public right-of-way. This includes alleys and other side streets, and is important to remember so that there are proper clearances for garbage trucks, snow plows, and other municipal equipment.

Do I need a survey?

Yes, if you are installing a fence closer than two feet to the rear or side property line (see above). A survey may also be required by the Community Development Department if there are other concerns regarding property lines, setbacks, visual clearance or any other potential problem that a survey would provide clarity on.

How do I find and hire a surveyor?

Visit landsurveyors.com, yellowpages.com, or review your physical copy of the Yellow Pages to find a land surveyor. Additionally, many engineering firms have a survey department within their operations. The city cannot recommend any specific surveyor or firm, and encourages you to perform due diligence when hiring a land surveyor.

What else do I need to know?

The Community Development Department may, when issuing your permit, also issue reasonable site specific conditions regarding the installation of your fence. The Department may also waive or reduce vision clearance requirements when traffic safety is not a concern due to physical conditions of the area, any existing traffic control devices, or if topographic conditions and existing building structures make it impractical to provide the required vision clearance.

I have a question that isn't covered, or I don't understand one of the requirements.

Please call the Community Development Department at 815-235-8202. Our helpful staff would be glad to provide assistance and clarification for you.