

**Village of**



**Germantown**

**Community Development Department  
Inspection Services**

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# Residential Building Permit Informational Packet

## Fences

# Village of Germantown

## Fences

### Building Permit Application Requirements

#### 1. Building Permit Application Form

- All building permit applications must be filled out completely to ensure prompt service. All forms are available on the Village of Germantown Website.
- The application must include the name, address, and license number of all contractors.
- If you are the property owner and reside at the project address, performing the work yourself, you may write "Owner" on the contractor line.

#### 2. Site Plan Documentation

- A survey plat is the preferred document for the required site plan.
- If you do not have a survey, you may visit the inspection service counter inside the Village Hall to check the property file for an existing survey.
- If a survey is not available, a scaled site plan or a screenshot from a GIS site is acceptable. (Property lines on GIS might not be completely accurate).
- Property information and maps can also be accessed online via the Village of Germantown website; navigate to the **Business & Development** tab at the top of the page, then select **Maps & GIS**.
- On the site plan, please mark the proposed fence location, its specific dimensions (length and height), all gate positions, and the chosen material (such as wood, PVC, or chain link).

#### 3. Utility Clearances

- The fence must be 3' away from any electric pedestal whether it's on your property or next door. Pedestals measure approximately 7" x 7" and stand about 30" tall.
- The fence must be 10' away from the side door of any pad-mounted electric transformer and at least 3' away from its other side whether it's on your property or next door. Transformers are square in shape and sit on a concrete pad. The door is the side with the padlock on it.

#### 4. Inspection

- Final fencing Inspection is required. It's the homeowner's or contractor's responsibility to verify property markers and lot lines before installing the fence. Markers and lot lines must be clearly marked for final inspection.

#### 5. Permit Application Submittal

- All forms, plans and documents can be emailed to [germantowninspections@safebuilt.com](mailto:germantowninspections@safebuilt.com)
- Plans and documents can be dropped off at the inspection service counter inside Village Hall between 8am – 3:30pm
- Applications will not be reviewed until all required information is received by the village.
- Permit applications will be reviewed and processed in the order received.

#### 6. Permit Approval and Payment

- **Notification:** You will be notified via phone or email once your permit has been reviewed and approved.
- **Pick-up and Payment:** Permits may be collected and paid for at the Inspection Services counter located inside Village Hall.
- **Accepted Payment Methods:** We accept cash, checks, and debit or credit cards. Please note that a 3.75% service fee applies to all card transactions.

1. All fences except "Temporary Fences", "Agricultural Fences" and "Exempt Fences" defined herein shall be subject to review and approval by the Building Inspector prior to the issuance of a building permit.
2. Fences in rear or side yards may be up to 6 feet in height.
3. Fences in front yards may not exceed 4 feet in height, except a maximum height of 6 feet may be approved with a Zoning Permit by the Plan Commission after consideration of visibility, privacy and access concerns.
4. No fence shall be closer than 2 feet to a public right-of-way, interfere with traffic visibility, or block or impede stormwater drainage that would affect adjacent or downstream property.
5. Fences shall be constructed using the following methods and materials:
  - i. Naturally resistant or treated wood
  - ii. Brick, masonry or natural stone
  - iii. Wrought iron, aluminum or galvanized metal (coated and noncoated)
  - iv. Vinyl (rigid PVC)
  - v. Other material of comparable quality must be approved by the Zoning Administrator.
  - vi. Fences that contain a finished side and an unfinished side, shall be installed in a manner in which the finished side faces the adjacent property. In case of a discrepancy, the Village Zoning Administrator shall determine which side of the fence is the finished side.
  - vii. The use of agricultural fences defined herein is prohibited in all Residential Zoning Districts except the Rs-1 and Rs-2 Districts when necessary for the containment of horses or other large animals permitted in the district and provided that the type of agricultural fence to be installed is agreed to by all abutting property owners.
6. Fences and Easements.
  - i. Fences should not be located within any type of utility or private easement unless written authorization to install said fence is provided to the Village at the time a building permit is submitted by the utility owner and/or beneficiary of the easement.
  - ii. The Plan Commission may authorize the installation of a fence in a publicly owned and maintained drainage easement where the owner of the land encumbered by the easement shows to the satisfaction of the Plan Commission that, considering the proposed location, design and materials of the proposed fence, the encroachment of the fence into the easement will not materially interfere with drainage flow within the easement, and, in the case of a subdivision, the homeowners association consents in writing to the encroachment, or if not in a subdivision, the adjacent landowners consent in writing.
  - iii. If the Plan Commission deems it necessary in order to make its decision to authorize an encroachment into a drainage easement by a fence, it may require that the applicant provide a report by a professional engineer providing an opinion that the encroachment will not impair drainage flow within the easement.
  - iv. Should it be necessary and in the public interest for the Village or its designee to remove a fence installed in a publicly owned and maintained easement or right-of-way, all costs (materials and labor) shall be borne by the owner of the fence.
  - v. If the installation of a fence in a public drainage easement is approved, the Plan Commission may require as a condition of approval that the property owner enter into an agreement with the Village that the property owner assumes responsibility for removing and/or replacing the fence and any other damages or costs if access to or maintenance of the easement is required by the Village.
  - vi.

If the applicant whose property abuts the drainage way shall be aggrieved by the decision of the Plan Commission, such aggrieved person may appeal the decision to the Village's Board of Zoning Appeals by filing an appeal within thirty (30) days after the date of the Plan Commission's decision.

- (g) Fences, Retaining Walls and Berms in Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional Districts. (Am. Ord. #09-2021; Am. Ord. #04-2025)
1. All fences shall be subject to review and approval by the Building Inspector prior to the issuance of a building permit.
  2. Fences in rear and/or side yards may be up to 10 feet in height.
  3. Fences in front of the building or within the front yard setback are only permitted after approval by the Plan Commission.
  4. Fences shall be constructed using the following methods and materials:
    - (i) Naturally resistant or treated wood.
    - (ii) Brick, masonry or natural stone.
    - (iii) Wrought iron, aluminum or galvanized metal (coated and noncoated).
    - (iv) Vinyl (rigid PVC).
    - (v) Other material of comparable quality must be approved by the Zoning Administrator.
    - (vi) Fences that contain a finished side and an unfinished side, shall be installed in a manner in which the finished side faces the adjacent property. In case of a discrepancy, the Village Zoning Administrator shall determine which side of the fence is the finished side.
  5. Fences and Easements. See section [17.50\(2\)\(f\)6.](#) above.
  6. It is the property owner's responsibility for any lawn maintenance of lands that lie between a fence and the property line.
  7. Repealed. (Rep. Ord. #04-2025)
  8. Retaining Walls. See section [17.41\(6\)](#).
  9. Berms. See section [17.57](#).
- (h) Fences, Retaining Walls and Berms in Agricultural Districts. (Cr. Ord. #04-2025; Am. Ord. #[17-2025](#))
1. Agricultural Fences.
    - i. Except as provided in subsection ii and iii below, partition fences are permitted in all agricultural zoning districts provided they meet the requirements under Chapter 90, Wis. Stats.
    - ii. Fences meeting the residential fence requirements under Section [17.50\(2\)\(f\)](#) may be installed on property in an agricultural district along a property line that abuts a residential district or when installed for privacy and/or security purposes for a farm dwelling or accessory buildings. Fences under this section may be up to 6 feet in height in any yard. A minimum setback distance necessary to provide adequate sight vision along a public street, shall be maintained for the street right-of-way.
    - iii. Fences meeting the fence requirements under Section [17.50\(2\)\(g\)](#) may be installed on property in an agricultural district along a property line that abuts a commercial, industrial, or institutional district. A minimum setback of distance necessary to provide adequate sight vision along a public street, shall be maintained from the public street right-of-way.
  2. It is the property owner's responsibility for any lawn maintenance of lands that lie between a fence and the property line.
  3. Fences and Easements. See Section [17.50\(2\)\(f\)6.](#) above.

# ILLUSTRATION OF ALLOWABLE FENCE OR WALL HEIGHT

