



Retaining Walls

What is a Retaining Wall?

The RDCO's Building Bylaw No. 1482 defines a **retaining wall** as a structure that holds or retains soil or other material behind it.

How Tall Can a Retaining Wall Be?

The RDCO's land use bylaws limit the height of a **retaining wall** to a maximum of 2.5m.

Retaining walls less than 1.5m high are considered landscaping walls and do not require a building permit. However, walls that exceed 1.5m high are considered structures which require engineering reports and a building permit.

Where site constraints may necessitate retaining walls that exceed 2.5m, a Development Variance Permit may be considered. Please refer to the Development Variance Permit bulletin for more information at rdco.com/planning.

Where Can Retaining Walls be Located?

A **retaining wall** under 1.5m high can be built within any required setbacks of the parcel, provided that they do not extend beyond the parcel boundary.

Retaining walls that exceed 1.5m cannot be located within front or corner side setback areas, but can be located within a side or rear setback. However, if they are over 2m high they must be sited at least 1m from the side or rear parcel line.

If a **retaining wall** is located less than 4.5m from a property line fronting a provincial public highway, it may require a permit from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

This bulletin is for informational purposes only. Please refer to the relevant bylaws for more information.

Building Bylaw No. 1482 Regulations

No person may construct or structurally repair, a **retaining wall** without a building permit if:

- any part of it is greater than 1.5m in height as measured from the bottom of the foundation to the top of the retaining structure;
- It is located in a riparian or floodplain area; or
- It supports a road or lane.

Zoning Bylaw No. 871 Regulations

- Retaining walls shall not be more than 2.5m high.
- Retaining walls (including landscaping walls) shall not be closer than 2.0m apart.
- The maximum height of a fence located on top of a retaining wall is 1.3m.

Additional Information

- Retaining walls within the Joe Rich Rural Land Use Bylaw are only subject to Building Bylaw No. 1482 regulations.
- If a Building Official determines that an unsafe condition exists as a result of the construction of a **retaining wall**, a building permit for a guard or fence may be required.
- Visit rdco.com/building for more information and to apply for a building permit if required.

