

Chapter 20.30 - WALLS AND FENCES

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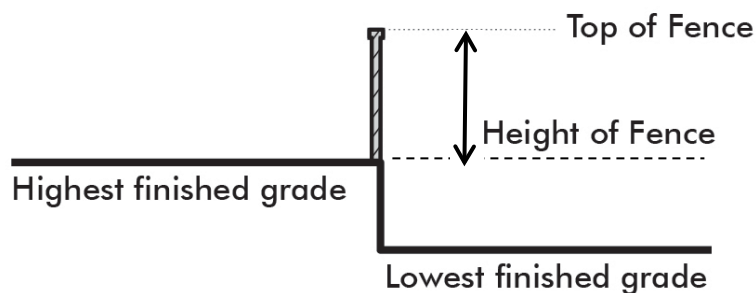
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20.30.010 Measurement of Fence and Wall Height

- A. **Measurement from Finished Grade.** The height of a fence or wall shall be measured from the adjacent finished grade at the base of the fence or wall, to the top edge of the fence or wall.
- B. **Ornamental Features.** Ornamental features that provide a screening function and are 50 percent or more opaque shall be included in the height measurement of a fence or wall.
- C. **Fences Atop Walls.** If a fence is atop a wall, the total height shall be measured from the base of the wall.
- D. **Different Finished Grades.** If the adjacent finished grade is different on opposite sides of a fence or wall, the height shall be measured from the side with the highest finished grade to the highest point on the fence. See Figure 20.30-1 (Fence and Wall Height).

FIGURE 20.30-1 FENCE AND WALL HEIGHT



20.30.020 Height Limits

A. Residential Zoning Districts.

1. **Basic Standards.** Fences, walls, and hedges in residential zoning districts shall comply with the standards in Table 20.30-1 (Fence Height in Residential Zoning Districts) and as illustrated in Figure 20.30-2 (Height Limits for Fences, Walls, and Hedges).
2. **Decorative Features and Materials.**
 - a. Any lattice or other similar material on top of a wall or fence cannot extend above the maximum fence height.
 - b. Decorative arches and other similar entry features within these setback areas may be up to 8 feet in height.



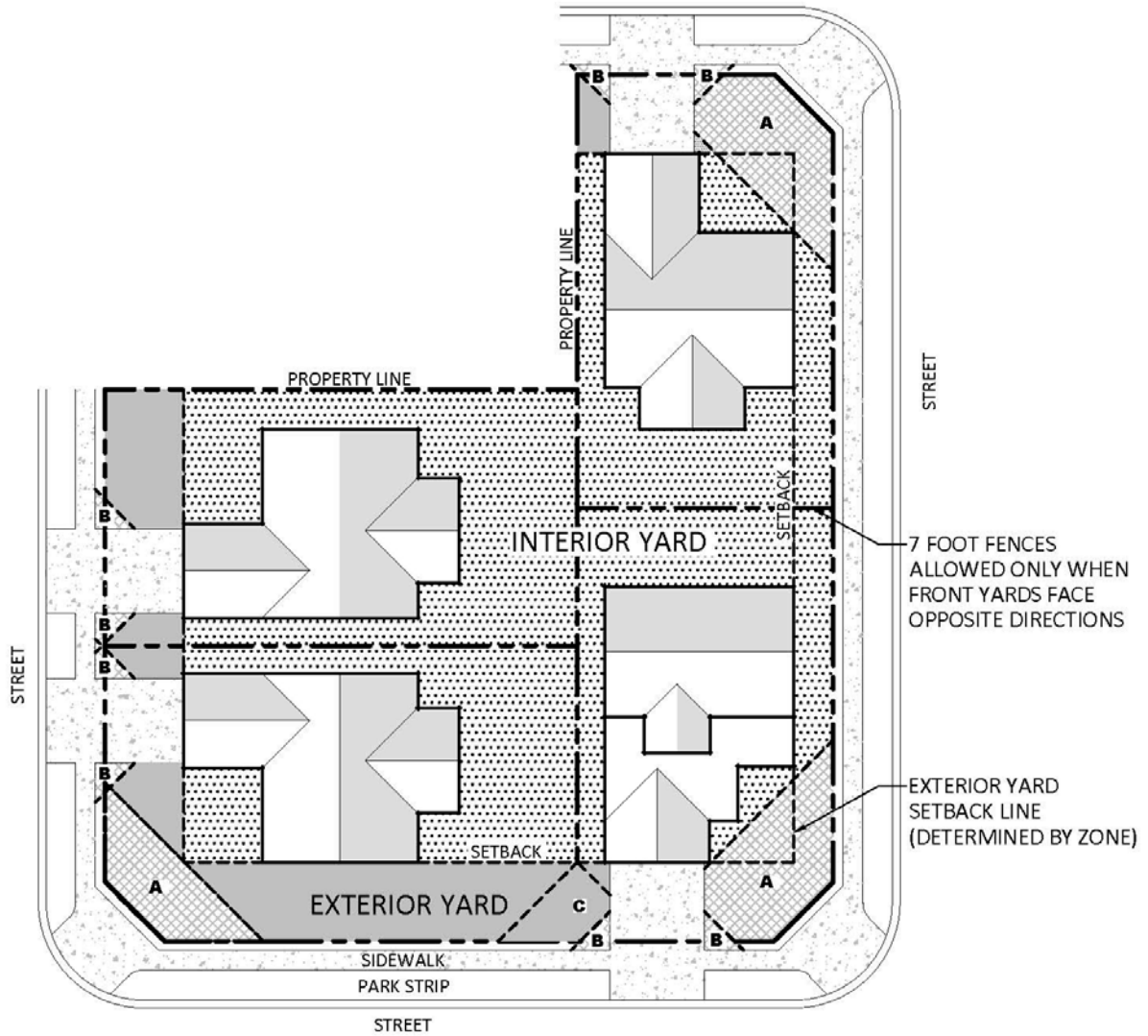
TABLE 20.30-1 FENCE HEIGHT IN RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS

Location	Maximum Height
Within required exterior yards	4 feet [1]
Within a driveway vision triangle	2.5 feet [2]
Within a corner vision triangle	See Section 20.30.040 (Vision Triangles)
All other locations [3]	7 feet [3]
Corner Lot Exterior Yards [4]	7 feet [4]




Notes:

- [1] Fence height for non-solid fences (wrought iron, chain link, picket, etc., that are mostly transparent) may be increased to a maximum of 6 feet with a Minor Use Permit.
- [2] As shown in Figure 20.30-02, a driveway vision triangle is the area on the street side of a line connecting two points, one on the back of sidewalk (or property line, whichever is closer to the street) and one on the side line of any public or private driveway or alley, each point being 10 feet from the point of intersection of the back of sidewalk (or property line, whichever is closer to the street) and the side line of the driveway or alley.
- [3] In multi-family zones, may be increased to 8 feet with a Minor Use Permit.
- [4] Only if corner lot exterior yard doesn't abut the front yard of an adjacent lot or possible adjacent lot.

FIGURE 20.30-2 HEIGHT LIMITS FOR FENCES, WALLS, AND HEDGES



Section 20.30 City of Merced Zoning Ordinance

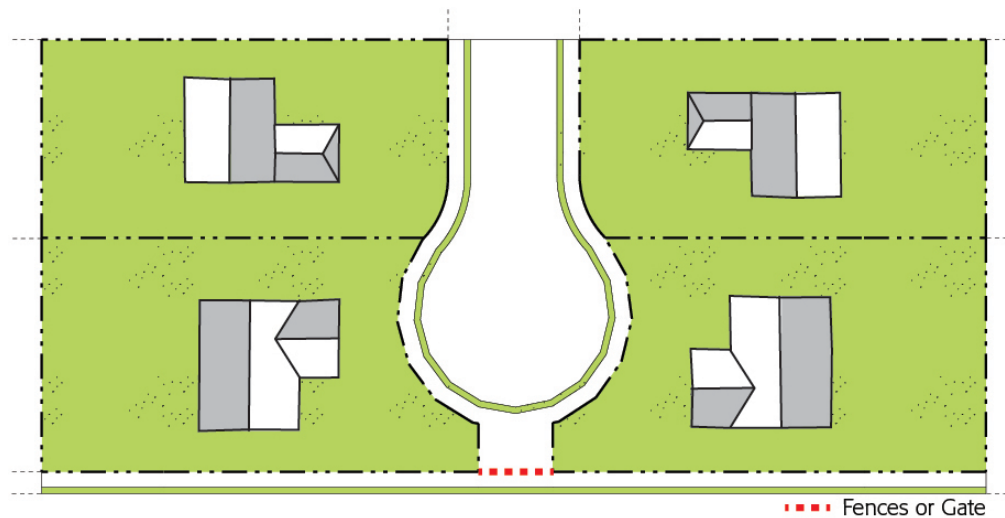
1. Fences, walls, and hedges may not exceed 7 feet in height in INTERIOR yards 
2. Fences, walls, and hedges may not exceed 4 feet in height in EXTERIOR yards 
3. Fences, walls, and hedges may not exceed 2 1/2 feet in height 
 - a. Within 40 feet from the intersection of street property lines (A above).
 - b. Within 10 feet from driveway aprons (B above).
4. In some cases, with a minor use permit, 4-6 foot non-solid fences may be allowed in corner lot EXTERIOR yards except in areas A, B, and C as shown above.

3. **Reversed Corner Lots.** Reversed corner lots are those whose front yard directly abuts the side or rear yard of the adjacent lot instead of another side or rear yard.
 - a. With a Minor Use Permit, fences, walls or hedges not exceeding seven (7) feet in height may be located in the required exterior side yard of a reversed corner lot: however, the fences, walls or hedges may not encroach into the triangular area, two (2) equal sides of which are the first twenty (20) feet of property lines of the subject reversed corner lot, measured from the point of intersection of the exterior side yard property line and the exterior yard property line shared with the adjacent lot.
 - b. If the front of a house is located on the exterior side yard on a reversed corner lot, then the front yard of the lot may be treated as a side yard.
4. **Through Lots.** On through lots with frontage on two parallel public streets, either property line separating the lot from a public street may be treated as the front lot line. In such cases, the minimum rear yard shall be the average of the yards on the lots next adjoining. If such adjoining lots are undeveloped, the minimum rear yard shall conform to the front yard setback for the zone in which the lot is located.
5. **Hedges in Exterior Yards.** Hedges or other plantings of any height are allowed in exterior yards if they are at least fifteen (15) feet from the property line.



6. **Open Ended Cul-De-Sac Lots.** For open-ended cul-de-sac lots, fences and gates in the required front yard or exterior side yard of a lot at the end of an open-ended cul-de-sac are permitted with approval of a Minor Use Permit. Any such fence or gate shall remain open for public to access into the block from the public right-of-way.

FIGURE 20.30-3 OPEN ENDED CUL-DE-SAC LOTS



B. Non-Residential Zoning Districts

1. The maximum height of a fence or wall within a non-residential zoning district shall be 8 feet.
2. Fences up to 10 feet in height may be approved with a Site Plan Review Permit or with any other discretionary permit if required for the same project.

C. Minor Use Permits for Fences. In addition to the requirements in Section 20.68.020 (Minor Use Permits), to approve a Minor Use Permits for fences, the following findings must be made by the reviewing authority:

1. The fence materials are of high quality with an aesthetically-pleasing appearance that fit in well with the neighborhood.
2. The added fence height or alternative material is necessary to address privacy, noise, interface, or security concerns and/or issues with animals.

20.30.030 Corner Vision Triangles

A. Definition. The minimum required area of a corner vision triangle is based on abutting street type as shown in Table 20.30-2 (Required Vision Triangle Distances by Street Type). The corner vision triangle is the area formed by measuring the distance “X” along the front and side property lines from the point of intersection, and then diagonally connecting the ends of the two lines. The back of sidewalk line may be used instead of the property line if the back of sidewalk is closer to the street and the property line is more than 1 1/2 feet behind the back of the sidewalk. See Figure 20.30-2 (Height Limits for Fences, Walls, and Hedges).



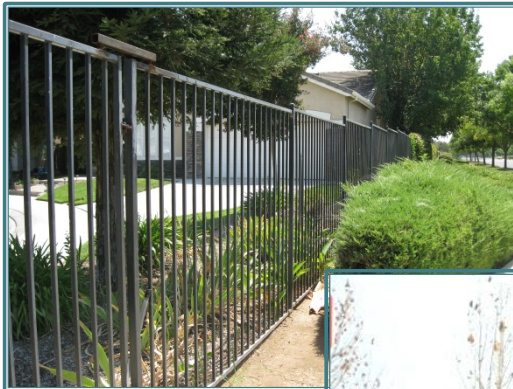
TABLE 20.30-2 REQUIRED VISION TRIANGLE DISTANCE BY STREET TYPE

Street Type	Distance "X"
Driveway or Alley	10 feet
Local Street or Rural Road	25 feet
Collector Street	40 feet
Arterial	40 feet

- B. **Maximum Height.** The maximum height of a fence or wall within a corner vision triangle is 2.5 feet.
- C. **Exceptions:** Maximum fence and wall height within corner vision triangles do not apply within a zoning district with no required exterior yards.

20.30.040 Materials

- A. **Permitted Materials.** Fences and walls shall be constructed of decorative masonry, ornamental steel or iron, or wood and shall be of a complementary color and material with adjacent buildings. Other materials may be permitted if the Director of Development Services determines the design to be compatible with adjacent structures and its surrounding neighborhood.



B. Prohibited Materials.

1. Fences and walls shall not be constructed of inappropriate materials such as sheet metal, vehicles, underground/above-ground tanks, garage doors, aluminum siding, corrugated tin, and other similar materials not specifically designed for use as fencing.



2. Barb-wire fences are prohibited in all zoning districts unless approved with a Minor Use Permit.

3. Razor wire fences are prohibited in all zoning districts

unless approved with a Minor Use Permit.



- C. Electric Fences.** Electric fences are prohibited in all residential zones. Electric fences are permitted in non-residential zoning districts only with a Minor Use Permit if set back a minimum of 5 feet from an exterior property line and located so that it cannot be touched by any person in the public right-of way.

