

Residential Fence Regulations and Codes for Oak Park, IL

The Village of Oak Park, with a population of about 52,000, is located adjacent to the west side of Chicago. Residents enjoy fast access to jobs and other activities in the city via extensive public transit options, making this suburb a popular commuter community. It's rich in historic homes and has a diverse population, along with a higher than average median household income level. The city includes a wide range of housing, from apartments and condos to neighborhoods full of single-family residences. Distinctive homes, including some designed by famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright, are located in three distinct historic districts.

General Ordinances for Residential Fences

Residents of Oak Park who are planning a fence construction project need to be aware of this city's strict ordinances. Finding the exact information needed for a specific home or neighborhood may require a visit to the Building and Property Standards office during the planning stages. Historic districts and developments with homeowners' associations may have even stricter rules on fence and materials. Local building contractors who build fences have the information needed, as well, and are of great help to homeowners in following all the city's regulations. The information below will provide a general guide to fence codes, but every project should be reviewed before installation begins.

- **Building Permit Required?** – A building permit is required for any new or replacement fence. Permit fees are based on project value.
- **Permit Documentation Needed** – You'll need a copy of the property's plat of survey with the location of the fence clearly identified. Materials, height, gate locations and swing direction, along with what percentage of the fence is open must be included. Any contractor named on the permit application must be licensed and registered with the city. While DIY fences are allowed, the complexity of the ordinances make it complicated for owners who want to build their own project. All permit applications are reviewed for compliance. No work is allowed without a valid permit.
- **Fence Materials Allowed** – Wood, vinyl, metal ornamental and chain link designs are allowed in residential areas.
- **Maximum Height Limits** – Maximum height for most fences is 6', but other height restrictions exist, depending on the location.
- **Property Line Issues** – No fixed setback rules exist, but fences must be within the property lines and cannot encroach on adjoining property.
- **Inspections Needed** – A final inspection after installation is required.
- **Building Authority Contact** – 708-358-5430
- **Building Department Website**

Specific Rules and Restrictions

- **Front Yard Fences** – These must be of at least 50% open design and no higher than 5’.
- **Side Yard Fences** – Maximum height is 6’ and the fence may not extend beyond the front of the building. Structures beyond the front of the building are considered to be front yard fences.
- **Back Yard Fences** – Along the sides of the rear yard, the maximum height is 6’. At the rear of the property, maximum height is 8’.
- **Corner Lot Restrictions** – All fences less than 35’ from intersecting streets may be no more than 5’ high and must meet strict open fencing standards to allow clear visibility for drivers on adjacent streets. They must be at least 50% open and strict standards for picket widths and spacing are specified.
- **Gates** – Gates may not swing over public property.
- **Other Codes**
 - Fences at townhome developments have special restrictions, which should be checked with building officials.
 - Barbed wire fencing is prohibited.
 - Fences with upward pointed protrusions are prohibited.
 - Electrically charged fences are prohibited.
- **Variances and Exceptions** – The Village Board of Trustees may allow variations from height limits and other restrictions in some cases. Such exceptions may require signed consent from adjoining property owners.
- **Historic District Fences** – Fence design and other construction details require specific approvals from the agency that oversees the district.
- **Homeowner’s Association Issues** – As in most cities, subdivisions and developments that are governed by an HOA or another association contract may have stricter rules that supersede city regulations.

Commercial Fence Codes

Fences in front of properties must be 50% open in construction and are limited to 5’ in height. Open wire chain link fences may be up to 8’ high. Black or brown vinyl-coated chain link materials are preferred in the city. Back yard fences may be up to 8’ high. In special circumstances, or for safety reasons, the Village Board of Trustees may allow higher fences.

Residential Fence Installation in the Village of Oak Park, IL

Although the ordinances regarding fences in this Chicago suburb may seem complex, that shouldn’t stop homeowners from planning attractive fence installations for their homes. If you’re thinking about building your own fence, visit the Village Building and Property Standards office to discuss your project. They’ll help you understand the codes and

ordinances. Or, get a consultation and estimate from a building contractor licensed in the city and discuss your ideas. Professional contractors understand the local regulations and can show you a range of styles and materials for your fence. Get an estimate for your project and compare the total cost with other contractors. In most cases, having your project built by a professional builder will be your best choice.