

Residential Fence Regulations and Codes for Evanston, IL

Evanston, a city of 75,000, is located in Cook County, IL, just north of Chicago and east of Skokie, another important suburb. With a median home value higher than many suburban communities and higher than average household incomes, Evanston is a popular city for many Illinois residents. It has fewer homes with young children and a higher average population age than some other suburban cities. Its lakeshore access and easy rail and public transit commuting into Chicago have made it a popular place to live for many who work in Chicago.

General Requirements for Residential Fences

Evanston and its residents take great pride in the city's neighborhoods and buildings. That's one of the reasons for its strict zoning and building regulations. When it comes to planning a fence installation for a home, the permit process is more complex than in most other communities. Requirements and restrictions vary from zoning district to zoning district, which can complicate the planning process. That's why most homeowners choose to have a licensed contractor in Evanston pull the permits and handle the construction job. The rules and ordinances listed below may vary, depending on where a property is located in the city, but are a good guide to most projects.

- **Building Permit Required?** – A permit is needed for all new and replacement fences within the Evanston city limits. Permit fees are based on the value of the project.
- **Permit Documentation Needed**
 - 3 copies of a current Plat of Survey
 - Building permit application
 - 3 copies of detailed plans and sketches
 - Fence Worksheet
 - Owner Affidavit Form (for DIY installations)
- **Fence Materials Allowed** – Wood, composite, PVC vinyl, metal ornamental, chain link and finished masonry are allowed.
- **Maximum Height Limits** – 6' maximum in side and rear yards. 4' maximum in front yards, where allowed. 8' where residential property line is adjacent to a non-residential or industrial zone.
- **Property Line Issues** – Must not encroach on neighboring properties. All posts and supports must face interior of property.
- **Inspections Needed** – An inspection is required on completion of construction.
- **Building Authority Contact** – 847-448-4311
- **Building Department Website**

Specific Rules and Restrictions

- **Front Yard Fences** – Not allowed, except on Type 1 streets. Where allowed, fence must be of open construction. Chain link front yard fencing is allowed only along certain streets. Check with the zoning department.
- **Side Yard Fences** – For side yards facing streets, front yard rules above apply. For interior side yards, the fence must be set back at least 3' from front of buildings.
- **Back Yard Fences** – All types of fences are allowed, up to 6' in height. Where property lines abut commercial or industrial property, the height can be up to 8'.
- **Corner Lot Restrictions** – All front yard restrictions apply to these lots for front and side yard fences which must not obstruct view of traffic.
- **Other Restrictions**
 - No barbed wire or unfinished concrete block fences in residential zones.
 - In historic preservation zones, stricter design and material rules may apply. Additional approvals may be required.
 - PVC vinyl fences may not have round posts and all materials must be recyclable.
 - Composite fencing materials must have at least 50% post-consumer or post-industrial wood fiber.
- **Allowed Construction Hours** – These are to prevent disrupting neighbors.
 - Monday – Friday 7 AM to 7 PM
 - Saturday – 8 AM to 5 PM
 - Sunday – No work allowed
- **Homeowner's Association Issues** – In subdivisions and developments governed by an association, other restrictions and specifications may apply. Check your HOA contract for details.

Commercial Fence Codes

- **Maximum Height Information** – 8' maximum height, depending on zoning and location on property. No height restrictions for open mesh fences around parks, recreation areas or schools.
- **Security Fence Rules**
 - Barbed wire, installed above 6' height is allowed.
 - Unfinished concrete block or cinder block walls are allowed.
 - Chain link fences are allowed within required side or rear yards.

Fence Building Codes in Evanston, IL

Building ordinances and codes, including for fences, can be complex, especially in cities like Evanston, which regulates construction in multiple zones. Each zone may have its own rules. To avoid disappointment or delays, consult with building and zoning department officials even before applying for a permit. They can help you avoid mistakes with many aspects of your plan. If you hire a building contractor licensed in Evanston, you can take advantage of their experience with these issues, too. As part of the project, the contractor will obtain the needed permits and help you understand what the exact rules are for your property. If you'll be building your fence as a DIY project, expect to make a few visits to the building department offices.