BUILDING BULLETIN

Bulletin No. 03-24	Revised: August 28, 2024

RETAINING WALLS

Purpose: The purpose of the bulletin is to clarify the requirements for retaining walls and associated fences.

Disclaimer: This Building Bulletin has been prepared as a convenience for the Town of Osoyoos residents. It is not intended to replace or supersede existing Building Code requirements, Town Bylaws or other legal documents which maintain legal authority. It is the responsibility of the user to verify the information and to make decisions based on the governing documents.

A *"retaining wall"* means a structure or series of interdependent structures greater than 1.2 metres in height constructed to hold back, stabilize or support an earthen bank.

Retaining walls and retaining structures greater than 1.2m in height, or greater than two horizontal to one vertical slope or setback ratio, or, where retaining walls may be "stacked" upon existing walls require a Building Permit. A Professional Engineer shall provide confirmation of the retaining wall design and installation in accordance with the submitted Letters of Assurance Schedule B.

Restrictions:

1. In the case of a fence constructed on top of a retaining wall, the combined height of the fence and the retaining wall at the parcel line or within 1.2 metres of the parcel line shall not exceed 1.8 metres in height, as measured from the finished grade of the abutting higher parcel.
2. The maximum height of a single retaining wall shall not exceed 3.0m without approval from the Planning and Development Department (Note: A Development Permit or Development Variance Permit may be required).
3. Stacked offset retaining walls that have a setback ratio of less than 2:1 shall be considered a single structure and will require a Building Permit even if each wall is 1.2m or less.
4. Retaining walls are not permitted to be constructed of uncemented rock or boulder piles or creosoted timbers.

Building Permit Submission Requirements (as a minimum – refer to Building Permit Checklist):

1. Title search (current within 6 months).
2. Sealed retaining wall design accompanied by Schedule B and proof of insurance from the Professional Engineer.
3. Site Plan indicating the location and extent of the wall(s).
4. Riparian Area Assessment for retaining walls proposed to be constructed in the foreshore.