

FENCING FAQs

The following is intended only as a summary of Borough regulations. The full ordinance can be found under the Planning and Zoning section of the Borough website.

Do I need a permit?

All fence installations, including replacement of an existing fence, require a permit. Forms can be found on the Borough website.

How high a fence can I put around my property?

The maximum height for a solid privacy fence is four (4) feet. The height may be increased to six (6) feet if the fence is at least 50% open, meaning that every segment is composed of at least fifty percent open spaces and fifty percent solid materials. (There is an exception for properties abutting commercial, institutional uses, or multi-family uses, or the railroad, which are permitted eight (8) foot solid fences).

Can the fence enclose my yard?

Yes, but the portion of the fence enclosing the yard must be located at or behind the rear building line of the principal building.⁽¹⁾

What materials are allowed?

Acceptable fencing materials are brick, wood, stone, concrete and metal (except for non-coated chain link) or other material that provides a reasonable duplication of such materials. Solid vinyl or other plastic fencing is not permitted. The finished side must face the adjacent property or the street.

What if I live on a busy street?

Houses abutting Baltimore Pike or other streets of high traffic density⁽²⁾ may request a Special Exception from the Zoning Hearing Board for the installation of a front yard fence. Such fences may be a maximum of three feet six inches (3'6") high and must be set back a minimum of four (4) feet from the sidewalk or right-of-way line.

What if I am just replacing an existing fence?

In most cases a previously existing fence, even if it does not conform to current regulations, may be replaced if it is in the same location and utilizes the same materials.

Do I have to get permission from my neighbors?

You do not need permission, but you must provide proof with your permit application that you have notified your neighbors of your intention to install a fence and that you have provided them with proof of the boundary line between your properties. In no case may a fence encroach on a neighbor's property.

(1) The Zoning Hearing Board may grant a Special Exception under certain circumstances. See Section 1264.05 (e)(B) of the Zoning Code.

(2) Streets of high traffic density are Fairview Avenue, Michigan Avenue, Swarthmore Avenue, Chester Road, Yale Avenue, and Cedar Lane between Swarthmore Avenue and Baltimore Pike).