



Fencing Standards

Fences can improve the aesthetics of a house and provide a sense of privacy. Before putting up a fence, you need to know Middleton's ordinances regulating the materials, location, height, and maintenance of fencing, landscaping walls, and decorative posts. You should also check for any deed restrictions or covenants on your property that might regulate improvements to your yard. Refer to the documents you signed and received when you purchased your house.

Who reviews and approves fence permits?

The Zoning Administrator reviews and approves fence permits through conditional use permits. Fences also require a building permit.

What if the fence is only temporary?

Permits are not required for temporary fencing. Temporary fencing is only allowed for the following purposes:

1. Garden fencing such as chicken wire or woven wire during the growing season, provided that the fencing is designed to support plants and/or help keep out garden pests.
2. The use of wood or plastic snow fences for the purposes of limiting snow drifting between November 1 and April 1.
3. The protection of excavation and construction sites and the protection of plants during grading and construction, in association with an active building permit

What materials am I allowed to use for a fence?

Fences shall be constructed using the following materials:

1. Naturally resistant or treated wood
2. Brick or masonry
3. Natural stone
4. Wrought iron
5. Vinyl
6. Galvanized and/or coated chain link, metal cable within a solid frame, or any other material of comparable quality as approved by the Zoning Administrator.

What materials are not allowed for a fence?

Fences shall **not** be constructed using the following materials:

1. Rope
2. String
3. Wire products
4. Netting
5. Cut or broken glass
6. Paper
7. Metal panels
8. Corrugated metal panels
9. Galvanized sheet metal
10. Plywood,
11. Pallets
12. Fiberglass or plastic panels.

What other regulations are there for specific materials?

The following regulation apply to other specific materials used for a fence:

1. Permanent chicken wire fences or snow fences shall not be used.
2. Wire mesh and non-coated/non-galvanized chain link fencing is not permitted within front yards in the SR-L, SR-M, SR-H, MH-D, TR-D, TR-F, MR-L, MR-M, and MR-H zoning districts, except when used in conjunction with parks, schools, airports, or other institutional uses.
3. Non-corrugated, solid metal fences are permitted in the I-L, I-M, I-H, IOS, IOC, AIR, and EXD zoning districts.
4. Barb wire fencing or similar security fencing shall be permitted only on the top of security fencing when located at least 6 feet above the ground and shall be permitted only in the I-H, IOS, EXD, and AIR districts. Such fences shall meet the setbacks for the principal structure.
5. Coated chain link fences shall have a minimum 9-gauge thickness, and a top rail support is required. Coated chain link fences shall not be permitted in front or street yards and shall not extend toward the street beyond the front of the building.

What design standards apply to fences?

Any fence located in the front yard shall be a maximum of 50 percent opaque, meaning that the spaces between the pickets are equal to or greater than the width of the pickets. See Figure 10.06.40a.

A fence that includes pre-woven or interwoven privacy fence slats and that is at least 90 percent opaque shall be considered a solid fence.

How tall can a fence be?

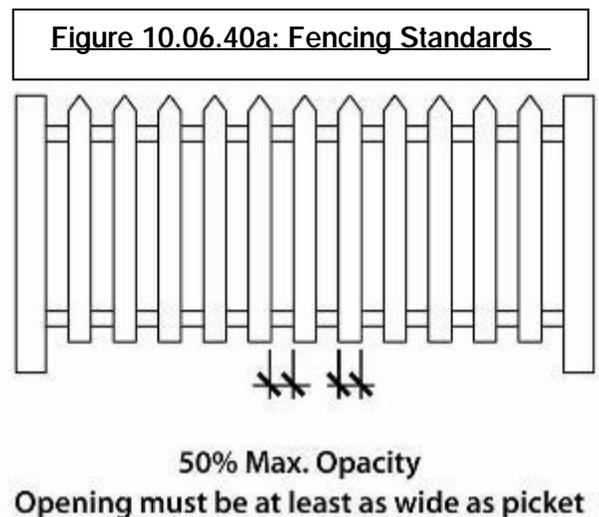
Maximum fence height varies based on the zoning district you are in. It is measured from the ground immediately under the fence to the top rail of the fence.

In the SR-L, SR-M, SR-H, MH-D, TR-D, TR-F, MR-L, MR-M, MR-H, INST, MU-N, MU-A, MU-U, MU-D, R-P, PR, and CON zoning districts:

1. 3 feet when located within the required or provided front yard or street yard, whichever is closer to the street.
2. 3 feet when located between the lakeshore and the required or provided rear or side yard facing the lake.
3. 6 feet within the side yard or rear yard, but not in the required front yard or forward of the front façade of the principal building.

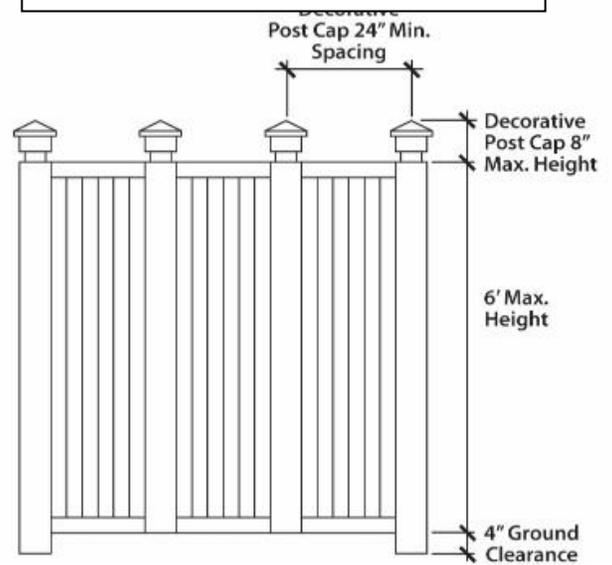
In the I-L, I-M, I-H, AGR, IOS, IOC, and EXD zoning districts:

1. 4 feet when located within the required or provided front yard or street yard, whichever is closer to the street.



- 8 feet within the side yard or rear yard, but not in the required front yard or beyond the front façade of the principal building.
- Where permitted, barb wire fencing or similar security fencing on top of fences shall not extend higher than 3 feet beyond the top of the fence.

Figure 10.06.40b: Fence Measurements



There are a few exceptions to height requirements:

- Decorative posts at a minimum spacing of 24 inches may extend 8 inches above the maximum height. See Figure 10.06.40b.
- To accommodate slopes and/or lawn maintenance, up to 4 inches of ground clearance shall be allowed which will not contribute to the measurement of maximum fence height.
- Berms with slopes less than or equal to a minimum of 3 feet of horizontal to a maximum of every 1 foot of vertical (i.e. 3:1) shall not contribute to the measurement of maximum fence height.

Where can a fence be located?

Fences may be located within or on any property line. They must meet the visibility standards in Section 10.06.05 of the zoning code.

Existing fences constructed prior to March 1, 2024 can continue in their current location, and are permitted to be replaced in their existing location as long as they don't encroach into a public utility or access easement.

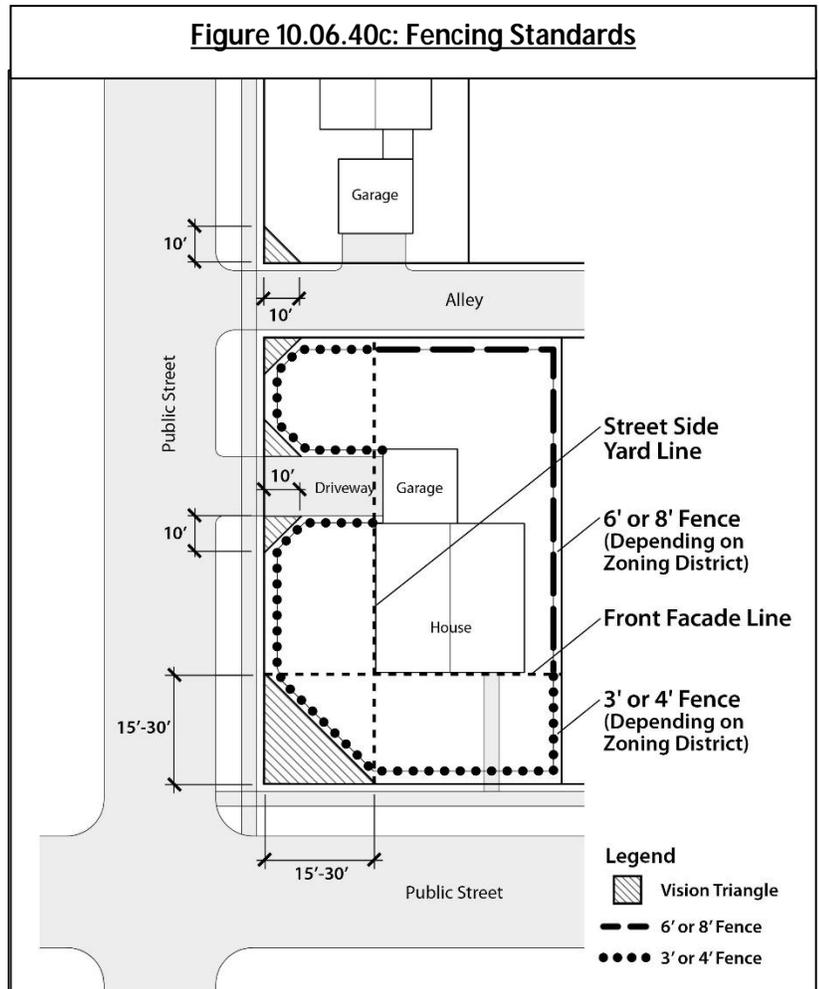
How should a fence be oriented?

Visible supports and other structural components should face toward the subject property. In other words, the finished side should face outward.

Additional questions?

Contact City of Middleton Planning & Community Development Department at

Figure 10.06.40c: Fencing Standards



- Legend**
- Vision Triangle
 - 6' or 8' Fence
 - 3' or 4' Fence

(608) 821-8370 or planning@cityofmiddleton.us.