

# GUIDE TO RETAINING WALLS

This brochure is a general guideline for retaining walls. Please refer to the zoning bylaw for exact regulations.

## DEFINITIONS:

**RETAINING WALL** is a structure constructed to retain soil or rock.

**NATURAL GRADE** is the undisturbed ground level formed without human intervention.

**FINISHED GRADE** is the final ground surface after development.

**GRADE LINE** means a line (-----) above which retaining walls and finished grade are restricted.

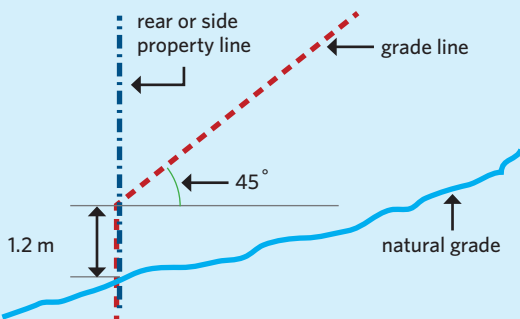
- The grade line from a REAR or SIDE property line is determined by drawing a line 1.2 m vertically from natural grade at the rear or side property line and then in toward the property at 45° (100%). See **FIGURE 1** and **FIGURE 2** below.
- For a FRONT or FLANKING property line grade line—see **FIGURE 3**.
- For a WATERFRONT property line grade line—see **FIGURE 4**.

## BUILDING PERMITS ARE REQUIRED FOR:

- any retaining wall 1.2 m in height or greater
- a rock stacked retaining wall that exceeds the slope of 1 vertical : 2 horizontal
- a series of two or more walls constructed closer than 1 vertical : 2 horizontal,
- artificial grade created by the placement of fill exceeding 1 vertical : 2 horizontal

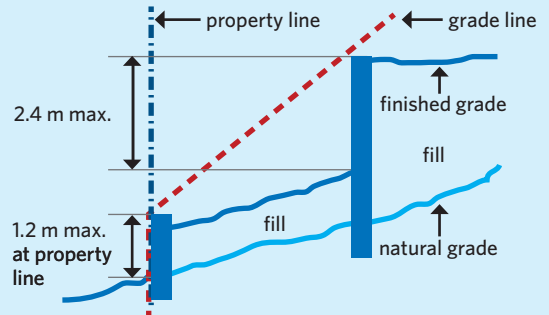
**Note:** All retaining wall permits require the supervision of its construction by a geotechnical and structural engineer.

**FIGURE 1**



**SITE SECTION**

**FIGURE 2**

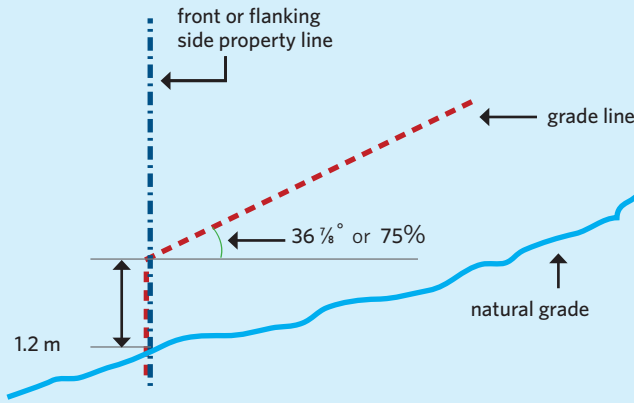


**SITE SECTION**

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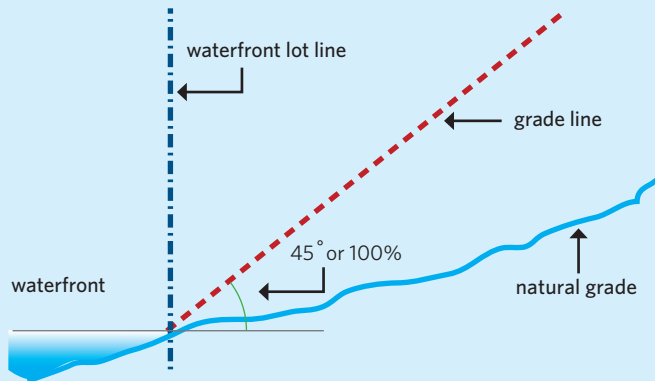
The grade line from a **FRONT OR FLANKING** side property line is determined by drawing a line 1.2 m vertically from natural grade at the property line and then in toward the property at a  $36\frac{7}{8}^{\circ}$  ( $75\%$ ) angle. See **FIGURE 3** below.

**FIGURE 3**



For a **WATERFRONT PROPERTY**, the grade line is measured upward at a  $45^{\circ}$  ( $100\%$ ) angle from the natural grade at the waterfront lot line, rather than from a point 1.2 m up from it. See **FIGURE 4** below.

**FIGURE 4**

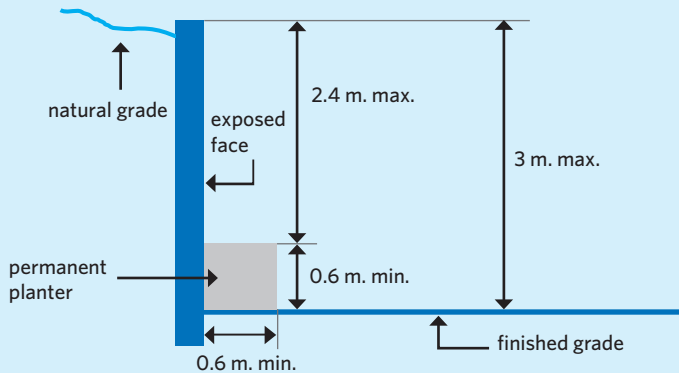


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## MAXIMUM EXPOSED FACE (HEIGHT ABOVE GROUND)

The maximum exposed face of an excavated wall (a shoring wall below natural grade) may be 3.0 m in height if it includes at its base a permanently constructed planter with a minimum depth and height of 0.6 m. See **FIGURE 5** below.

**FIGURE 5**

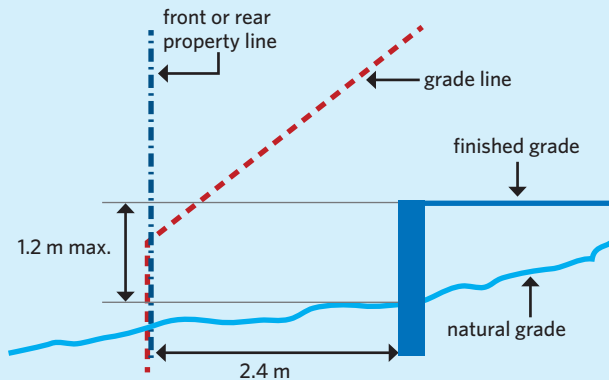


**SITE SECTION**

## SPECIAL FRONT AND REAR YARD SITING REGULATIONS:

A retaining wall over 1.2 m in height may not be located closer than 2.4 m to a **front** or **rear** property line. See **FIGURE 6** below.

**FIGURE 6**

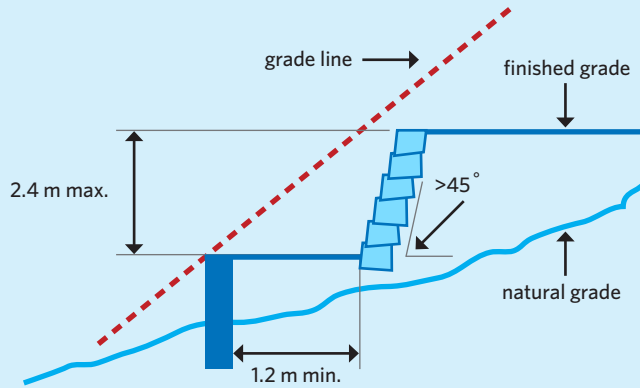


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Any retaining wall greater than 1.2 m in exposed height and having a slope greater than 45° must be a minimum of 1.2 m away from a parallel wall. See **FIGURE 7** below.

**FIGURE 7**

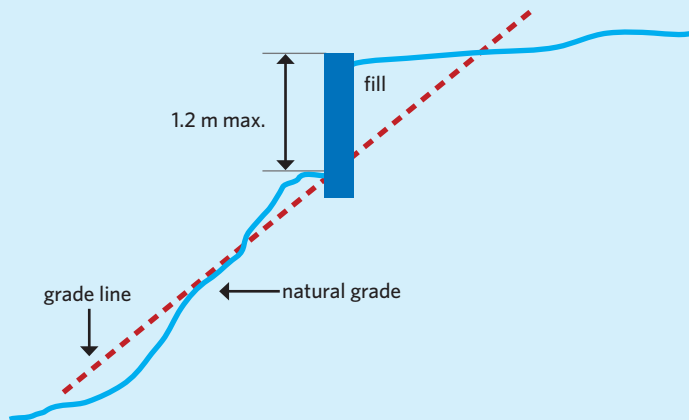


SITE SECTION

Where natural grade exceeds the grade line, the maximum exposed height of a retaining wall is 1.2 m above natural grade.

See **FIGURE 8** below.

**FIGURE 8**



SITE SECTION