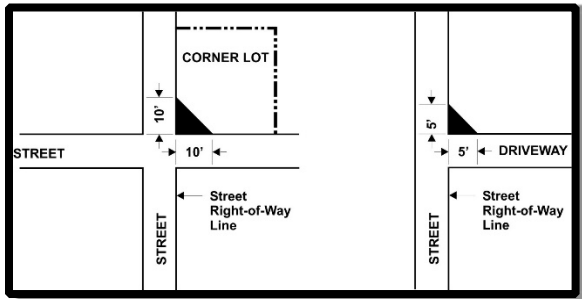


## Are there rules to maintain clear vision at corners?

Yes, Section 19.3.2 Clear Vision Areas of the Zoning Ordinance prohibits obstructions of 30" or more in height under certain conditions as shown below.

Where a street/alley intersect with a street, the clear vision area is ten feet (10'). Where a driveway intersects with a street/alley the clear vision area is five feet (5'). The clear vision area promotes safety and helps both pedestrians and drivers see vehicles entering a street. Measurements are along lot lines.



## If my property slopes, how is the fence height measured?

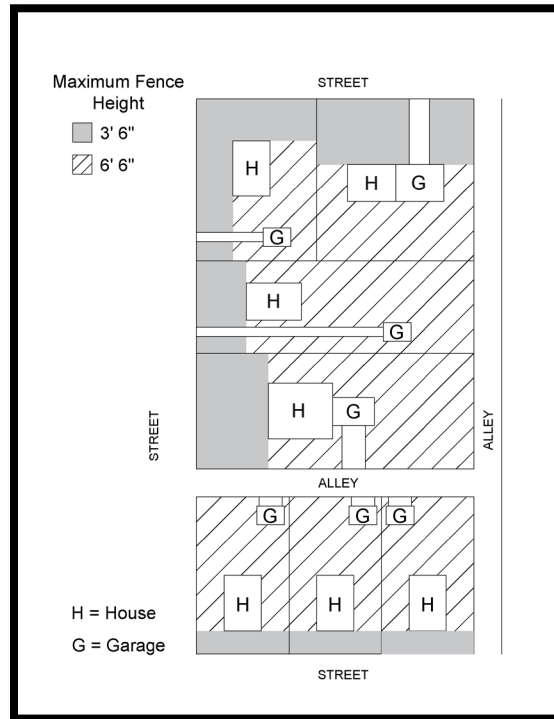
All portions of the fence are measured from grade to the highest point. If the ground slopes, the fence may not have a straight top edge, unless portions of the fence are shorter.

## How deep should the support posts be in the ground?

There are no requirements for fence post depths. Some manufacturers suggest 1/3 of the fence/support height should be buried.

## What is the maximum height for a fence?

Residential fencing located in the front yard can be 3'6" and fencing located in the rear and side yards can be 6'6" in height.



## Where can I go to learn more about the Fence Ordinance?

The Fence Ordinance is on the city's website [www.sjcity.com](http://www.sjcity.com) – Government – Departments – Building Inspection, or you may call the Inspection Department at 269.983.1212.

It is important to review the entire Fence Ordinance to obtain all relevant information. The information provided in this handout is general and describes only the basic regulations.

# INFORMATIONAL GUIDE FENCE REGULATIONS AND PERMITS



City of St. Joseph, Michigan  
Community Development Department  
and

Inspection Department  
700 Broad Street  
St. Joseph, MI 49085  
Phone (269)983-1212  
[www.sjcity.com](http://www.sjcity.com)



Fences offer privacy and enclosures that may be desirable in a residential or commercial setting. Fences also create a visual impact on private properties and neighborhoods. The City of St. Joseph regulates the placement of fencing on private property to help protect the health and safety of the residents and visitors.

Chapter 12 “Fences” of the Code of Ordinances provides the specific regulations. In addition, the Zoning Ordinance describes when fence screening is required.

**When is a fence permit needed?**



Any time a fence is being installed or relocated on a property, a fence permit is required. On occasion, fencing needs repair. The replacement in kind (same material, style and location) of a few panels or posts is allowed without a permit. However, many times the replacement of a few panels turns into a new fence, which requires a permit. Please contact the Inspection Department for guidance before starting.

**Who is responsible for obtaining the fence permit?**

It is recommended that the person/company installing the fence obtain the permit. If the homeowner obtains the permit and someone else installs the fence, the homeowner is responsible for correcting any noncompliant items.

**What do I need to get a fence permit?**

The Fence Permit Application must be completed and submitted along with the application fee and either a site plan or plat of survey of the property which shows the location and measurements of the proposed fence.

**How long does it take to get a fence permit and when can we start?**



If all information is complete and there are no items to be addressed, permits can be issued within one week. No work can take place until a fence permit has been received by the applicant.

**Do I need a permit to install an electric dog fence?**

Yes, an electrical permit is required.

**Are any inspections required?**

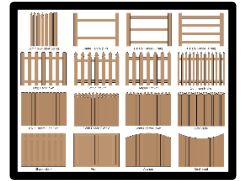
A final inspection is required once the fence has been installed and the area has been restored. Call the Inspection Department to schedule the final inspection. In most cases, no one needs to be home for the inspection to take place.

**How do I find where my property lines are located?**

Sometimes property owners are able to find the survey monuments at the corners of their property and know the dimensions of their lot. In some cases, a land surveyor may be hired to locate the property corners to make sure the fence is not installed on a neighbor’s property. The City is unable to help find property corners.

**Are there any fence types or styles that are not allowed?**

Barbed wire, razor wire or other similar materials or electrically charged fences are not allowed except in certain limited circumstances or exemptions listed in Sections 12-6 and 12-8 of the Fence Ordinance.



If installing a picket fence or one which has a “good” side and a “bad” side, the good side must face out away from the property. All support structures must be located within the property where the fence is located.

**What if a fence falls into disrepair?**

All fences must be maintained as required by the property maintenance code. Depending on the type of fence and level of disrepair, the City may require the fence to be painted, repaired or removed.

**Can a fence be placed on a lot line?**

All portions of any fence must be located completely on your property.

**I might have underground utilities?**

It is your responsibility to call MISS DIG at 811. Allow a couple of days for locating.



**I think my neighbor installed their fence on my property. What should I do?**

Unfortunately, property line disputes are a civil matter and the City is unable to mediate between the property owners. The Inspection Department has a list of mediation referrals.