



June 25, 2008

On Site Retaining Walls

Bulletin 2008-001-BG

This bulletin is intended to advise all Builders and Developers of the requirements contained within our building and zoning bylaws of what is required when retaining walls are intended to be installed on property as part of the house construction process. Included are the relevant excerpts from both the Building and Zoning bylaws.

When a geotechnical covenant is registered on a lot we require either;

1. A sealed letter from a geotechnical Engineer indicating, the wall has no geotechnical impact on the site, **OR**
2. A sealed letter from a geotechnical engineer where the wall is less than 1.0m in height but does need evaluation based on the registered covenant (it will be left up to the geotechnical engineer to determine what needs to be satisfied), **OR**
3. Schedule B for geotechnical **plus** a sealed wall design when the wall exceeds 1.0m in height.

Engineering is required when;

1. A single wall exceeds 1m in height (structural and/or geotechnical), **OR**
2. The setback between consecutive (tiered) walls is less than 3m (geotechnical and structural engineers required).

Engineering in the form of a sealed wall design with a Schedule B are to be submitted at time of retaining wall application. Wall design may be done by the geotechnical engineer or structural engineer. Either professional must speak to the others discipline when submitting the Schedule B.

Any retaining walls not shown on or deviating from the approved lot grading plan will require a sealed submission from the lot grading engineer. This is to identify the location of the retaining wall(s) along with a note – under seal – indicating the wall(s) do not adversely affect the lot grading design for the subdivision

The applicable sections that require permits and engineering can be found in the building bylaw under sections 24.2 and 24.3 (pg.18) and subsection 403.(8) (pg.22) of the zoning bylaws General Regulations. Included for your convenience are the applicable sections out of the referenced documents.

- 24.2 All walls, grade transitions and methods of soil retention shall be shown on the site plan including all details of **Construction**. Any wall (method of soil retention) over 1 metre high shall be structurally engineered except that in geotechnically sensitive areas, the **Chief Building Official** may require a Geotechnical Engineer to design and inspect the method of retention. A **registered professional** shall supervise the design and **Construction** of a retaining **Structure** greater than 1.0 meters in height. Sealed copies of the design plan and **field review** reports prepared by the **registered professional** for all retaining **Structures** greater than 1.0 meters in height shall be submitted to a **Building Official** prior to acceptance of the works.
- 24.3 Any retaining wall (method of soil retention) or grade alteration over 0.50 metres will require a **Permit** for grade alteration or retaining wall(s) except that where the retaining wall(s) have been identified on the initial **Building Permit** application, no separate retaining wall **Permit** will be required.

We hope that this will assist in clearing up any misunderstandings of what is required for the installation of retaining walls. We also hope that this will help all parties involved in expediting the permit process. Should you have any questions you may contact the permits department staff for clarification as needed.

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