



City of Urbandale

3600 86th Street
Urbandale, IA 50322-4057

www.urbandale.org

Building Department (515) 278-3935



Retaining Wall Regulations

Required Inspections

1. **Pins and Setbacks** - The property corner pins must be exposed to view and the locations for retaining walls marked.
2. **Footing**- If applicable
3. **Framing** – If applicable to inspect wall prior to backfill
4. **Final Inspection** – Please schedule once work has been completed to close permit.

Building Permit Required

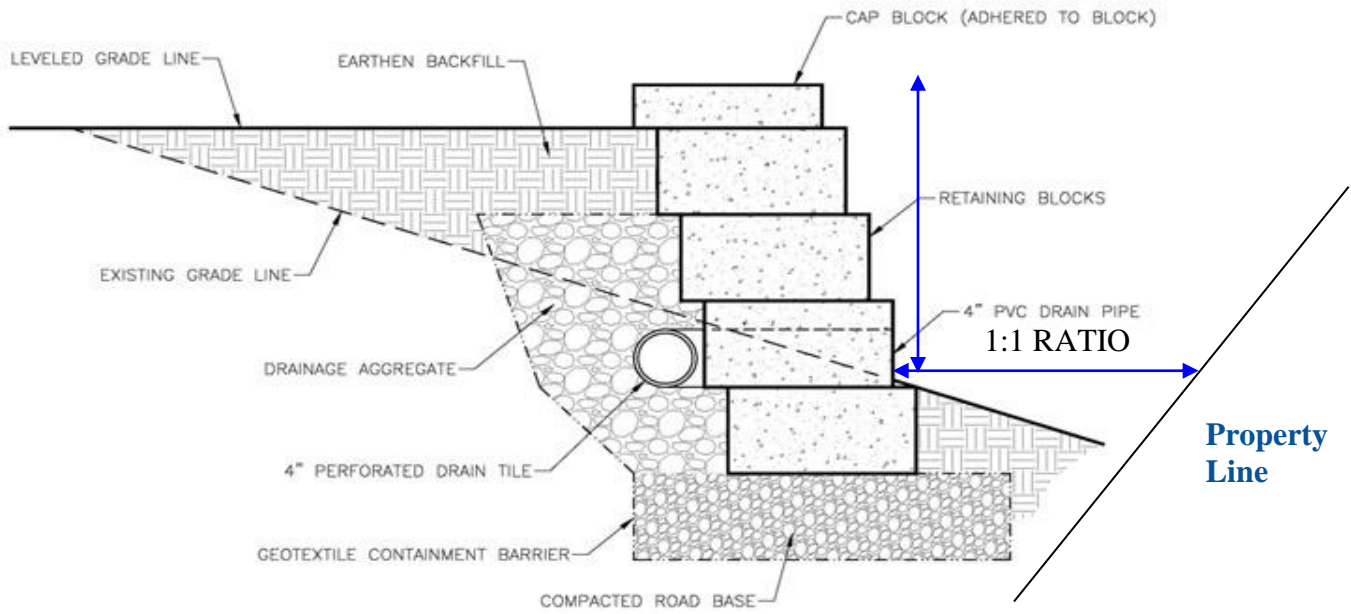
Retaining walls that retain more than 48 in. of unbalanced fill require a permit. R105.1

Design

- Applications for building permits can be obtained online <https://www.citizenserve.com/urbandale>.
- Retaining walls that retain more than 48 in. of unbalanced fill shall be structurally designed.
Muni Code 150.03 (26) (a).
- Retaining wall location must be shown on a site plan.
- Guards are required to be provided on retaining walls that are 30 in. or more above grade when; the retaining wall is considered part of a building structure, the retaining wall is near a finished walking surface (loading dock, sidewalk, bike path, patio, or similar), or in any location on a commercial or multifamily project where the height and location of the retaining wall create an obvious fall hazard.”
Urbandale Ordinance 150.03 (26) (c).
- Retaining walls that are not laterally supported at the top and that retain more than 48 in. of unbalanced fill, or retaining walls exceeding 24 in. in height that resist lateral loads in addition to soil, must be designed in accordance with accepted engineering practice to ensure stability against overturning, sliding, excessive foundation pressure and water uplift. Retaining walls are required to be designed for a safety factor of 1.5 against lateral sliding and overturning.
- **Setbacks** - All retaining walls must be set back from property lines by a minimum height to setback distance ratio of one-to-one. (See example below) a **(4) foot-tall wall** must be setback a minimum of **(4) feet from the property line**. Urbandale Ordinance 150.03 (26) (b).
- **Easements**- Public Utility Easements, Storm Sewer Easements, Sanitary Sewer Easements, Drainage Easements, Surface Water Flowage Easements, and Pedestrian Easements prohibit encroachment by structures such as retaining walls.
- **Restrictive Covenants**-The owner should check the restrictive covenants for their neighborhood to assure compliance with covenant regulations regarding fences. Restrictive covenant information may also be obtained at the County Recorder’s office.

- **Need more Information**

Contact the Zoning Department at the Community Development and Engineering offices, 3600 86th Street, or by telephone at (515) 278-3935.



SECTION VIEW OF “EXAMPLE” RETAINING WALL