

Retaining walls | building consents and other requirements



This document provides information on building consents and other requirements around the construction of retaining walls.

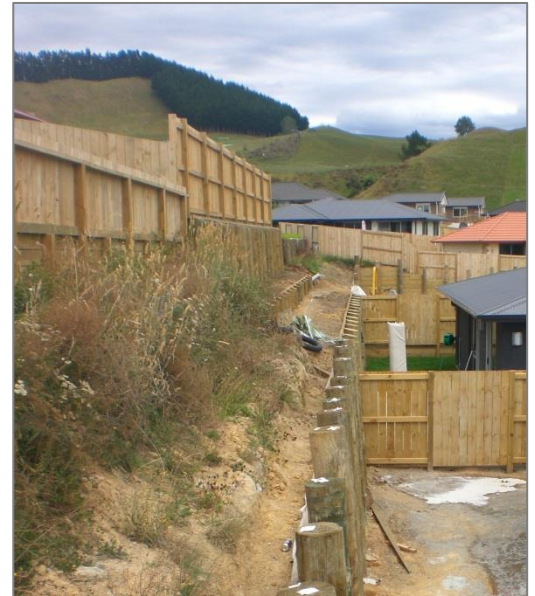
Do I need a building consent for my retaining wall?

> 1.5m All retaining walls at or over 1.5m high require a building consent.

< 1.5m Retaining walls less than 1.5m high may not require a building consent, if and only if the wall does not and will not be bearing a surcharge.

Surcharge means a weight other than that of the ground that is being retained i.e. a house or parked car, a neighbouring property, a slope greater than 5° above the wall.

If the wall is taking surcharge, an engineer's report/design may be required. Please call us on 07 5777 000 to discuss this before you lodge your building consent. Please note that in these cases we cannot provide an estimate on building consent costs until we know whether an engineer's report/design is required. Do call us if you are unsure or would like further guidance.



A surcharge-bearing retaining wall requires a building consent

Other things to know when designing a retaining wall

- Containment** The construction of the retaining wall must be completely contained on the owner's property. This means it cannot be cutting into the neighbouring property (including drainage and back cut filling).
- Specific design** All retaining walls are required to comply with the performance standards of the NZ Building Code and may require a specific design from a Chartered Professional Engineer.
- Durability** All retaining walls subject to a building consent should demonstrate their ability to meet the durability standard of the Building Code (NZBC B2) i.e. 50 year durability.
- Fall protection** All retaining walls 1.0m and over will in many cases require a means of fall protection e.g. a barrier fence. This will ensure compliance with NZ Building Code Clause F4 (safety from falling). Go to www.dbh.govt.nz for more information on Building Code requirements.
- Managing sediment pollution** Sediment control must also be addressed to TCC requirements and NZ Building Code Clause E1 (surface water). Go to www.dbh.govt.nz for more information on Building Code requirements.
- City Plan** Please note that rules contained in the Tauranga City Plan should also be taken into consideration when constructing any retaining wall and that in some instances resource consents may be required prior to that work being undertaken. For example, a retaining wall which includes a fence or safety barrier and would result in these structures having a combined height of more than 2.0m above ground level will be considered a building under the City Plan. It would then need to meet the rules relating to setbacks as detailed in the City Plan.
- If you have any queries regarding City Plan rules, please call 07 577 7000 and ask to speak to Council's Duty Planner.

