



#B007

RETAINING WALLS



What is a Retaining Wall?

A retaining wall is a wall constructed to support a surcharge from

Liquids (such as a pool wall)
Driveways
Hillsides/Shorelines

Retaining walls can be constructed of just about any material but commonly you will see ecology blocks, bricks, concrete and wood used.

When Is A Permit Required?

A Building Permit is required if any of the following conditions are met:

- The wall is over 4' in height (as measured from the top of the wall to the bottom of the footing)
- The wall supports a surcharge

What is a Surcharge?

A surcharge is any load imposed on a retaining wall. A wall at the bottom of a steep slope or a parking area adjacent to a retaining wall both provide loads on a wall. See figure below.

When is an Engineer Required?

Typically, an engineer is required to design your wall if:

- The wall supports a surcharge and is over 2 feet in height (as measured from the top of the wall to the bottom of the footing)
- The wall exceeds 4 feet in height (regardless if supporting a surcharge)

What Else Should I Know?

- If your site has unstable soil conditions, your project may require review by our Development Engineer.
- Verify the location of all utilities before starting work. Call before you dig. 1(800)424-5555.
- All development within 200' of ordinary high water requires the submittal of a Shoreline Substantial Development Exemption prior to the submission of a building permit.
- Consult the Planning Division at Bainbridge Island City Hall to confirm your setbacks or other zoning regulations related to shorelines or critical areas.

Still Have Questions?

Contact us at (206)780-3750 or email pcd@bainbridgewa.gov.