

Bulletin: Retaining Walls



Created: Sept 11, 2023

Updated: Sept 18, 2024

This information is summarized for convenience. Please refer to the applicable bylaw for the complete regulation.

Properties must satisfy all applicable Bylaws/ Regulations of the City of Kelowna and conform to the B.C. Building Code.

Development Planning
1435 Water Street
Kelowna, BC V1Y 1J4
TEL 250-469-8626
planninginfo@kelowna.ca

Purpose:

To inform building contractors, designers, landscape contractors/architects and homeowners of the City of Kelowna Soil Removal and Deposit Regulation Bylaw No. 9612 and Zoning Bylaw No. 12375 requirements pertaining to the construction of retaining walls.

Retaining walls not permitted:

The City of Kelowna Zoning Bylaw (Section 7) restricts retaining wall heights on all lots to 1.2 m, with exceptions to walls approved via subdivision or walls measured from grade, where the natural grade of the subject property is lower than the abutting property and the walls are 3 m high or less (A Development Variance Permit is required for retaining walls not meeting this criteria and must be applied for and approved by City Council or delegated authority). For more information on Retaining Wall regulations, please visit [Zoning Bylaw No. 12375 Section 7 – Site Layout](#).

When is a permit required:

- Any retaining wall over 1.2 m high (**may require a zoning bylaw variance**).
- 3 or more retaining tiers of 1.2 m high walls (spaced a minimum of 1.2 m horizontally).
- 2 retaining tiers with a combined height more than 2.4 m (spaced a minimum of 1.2 m horizontally with a slope in between the tiers).
- 2 retaining tiers with a combined height of 2.4 m (spaced less than 1.2 m horizontally) (**may require a zoning bylaw variance**).

Permit applications are submitted through the City of Kelowna Development Planning Department in City Hall. Applications must include sealed engineered drawings/specifications and an EGBC – Engineer of Record – Retaining Wall Assurance Statement. If you have questions about the application process, please Ph: 250-469-8626 or planninginfo@kelowna.ca

When is a permit not required:

- Any retaining wall 1.2 m high or lower.
- A maximum of two retaining wall tiers of 1.2 m high walls (spaced a minimum of 1.2 m horizontally for a maximum total height of 2.4 m).

Conclusion

This is to emphasize the above restrictions to the City of Kelowna Soil Removal and Deposit Regulation Bylaw No. 9612. Failure to comply with requirements of the Zoning and Soil Removal and Deposit Regulation Bylaws will result in an immediate Stop Work Order and may require the removal of the retaining wall(s). City Council may not approve a Development Variance Permit application for over height retaining walls that have been constructed in non-compliance with City bylaws. For more information on Retaining Wall regulations, please visit [Zoning Bylaw No. 12375 Section 7 – Site Layout](#).