

The City of Onalaska **does not** require permits for fences in residential neighborhoods. City staff perform fence inspections to ensure fences comply with fence regulations summarized herein.

City staff recommend the following best practices when installing a fence:

- Find lot pins to properly identify property boundaries. City staff may provide property maps, but they are for informational purposes only. Surveyed lot pins identify exact locations.
- Install fence posts a minimum of 6 inches from a property line in an effort to contain the entire fence on the property.
- Install fence panels slightly off the ground to allow for lawn care activities.

City of Onalaska, WI  
415 Main Street  
Onalaska, WI 54650



**Questions?**

**Onalaska Planning/Zoning  
Department**

608-781-9590

[kaspenson@cityofonalaska.com](mailto:kaspenson@cityofonalaska.com)

**Monday - Friday**

**8:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.**

<http://www.cityofonalaska.com>

This brochure is meant to provide information on various regulations enforced by the City of Onalaska. The purpose of the brochure is to provide citizen with basic, easy-to-use information regarding City Codes.



---

**City of Onalaska**  
**PLANNING / ZONING**  
**DEPARTMENT**

---

## **What to Know About Fence Regulations**



**Information for homeowners  
and contractors**

Date Updated: 02/21/2022

The City of Onalaska is committed to ensuring an attractive and well-maintained city with the cooperation of the community.

Onalaska has maintained a high standard. This brochure notes some of the major aspects of the City's ordinance regarding fence construction in residential areas.

## Residential Fence Regulations

### • Fence Materials:

Fence is defined as an enclosed barrier consisting of wood, vinyl, composite, stone, metal or vegetation (shrubbery and hedges).

### • Fence Construction:

Fences are to be maintained, kept safe and in a state of good repair and appearance. The finished or decorative side of a fence is required to face neighboring properties. Fences are to be located so that each side of the fence may be maintained by the owner of the fence while on said owner's property.

### • Allowable Fence Heights:

#### → Front/Street Yard

Maximum height 4 feet. Setback a minimum 3 feet from right-of-way.

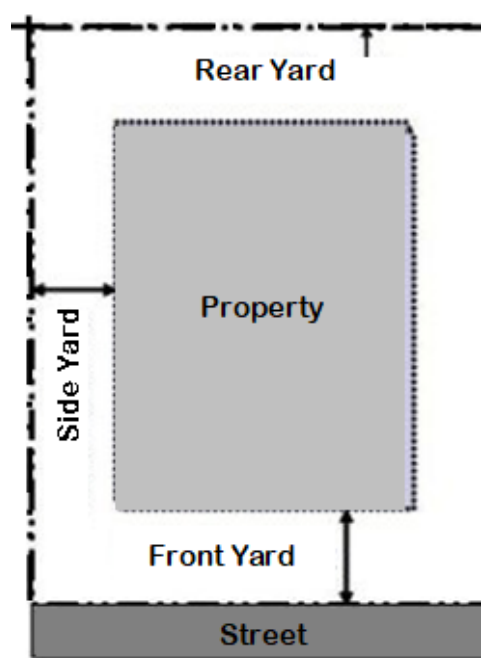
#### → Side Yard

Maximum height 6 feet. Allowed up to property line, but a setback of 6 inches is recommended.

#### → Rear Yard

Maximum height 6 feet. Allowed up to property line, but a setback of 6 inches is recommended.

The below image illustrates property lines, front/street yards, side yards, and rear yards.



Retrieved from: <https://landforsalestore.com/what-are-lot-lines-setbacks-easements-etc/>

### What if I have an existing fence that doesn't meet the height and setback regulations?

Any existing fence or hedge in residential districts, which are legally constructed are considered grandfathered. No alterations, modifications, or improvements may be made outside of the basic fence maintenance activities.

### Swimming Pool Fencing:

See our brochure on Residential Swimming Pools. Contact Inspection Department at 608-781-9541 for additional questions.

## Definitions / Illustrations

### Front/Street Yard:

The required area of open space, determined by the minimum front yard setback from the right-of-way to the nearest portion of foundation. A yard extending across the full width of the lot. Corner lots have two (2) front yards.



### Side Yard:

The required area of open space, determined by the minimum side yard setback, between any structure foundation and the side lot line extending from the front/street yard to the rear yard.



### Rear Yard:

The required area of open space, as determined by the minimum rear yard setback, between any structure foundation and the rear lot line. A yard extending across the full width of the lot. This yard is the opposite the front/street yard or one (1) of the street yards on a corner parcel.

