

Chapter 18.46 FENCING

Sections:

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18.46.010 Intent.

The intent of this chapter is to establish minimum requirements and standards for fencing where needed to promote safety, provide screening to safeguard privacy and to protect the aesthetic assets of the community in general.

(Ord. O97-024, Amended, 03/03/1998; Ord. 883, Added, 05/06/1984)

18.46.020 Fences – General requirements.

A. No fence shall contain barbed wire, electrical current or charge of electricity, except:

1. Where a legally established use exists for the containment of animals for agriculture, or for the protection of agriculture property from animals, low voltage electrical current may be used in all yards in nonresidential zones and side and rear yards in residential zones; and
2. In all commercial and industrial zone districts barbed wire shall be permitted as long as such wire is located not less than six feet above grade. Broken glass or similar hazardous materials shall not be used anywhere within the city; and
3. Fences containing barbed wire may be constructed surrounding city utility facilities, wireless communication facilities, utility substations and natural gas facilities as long as such wire is located not less than six feet above grade.

B. Swimming pools must be located behind the front yard setback line and the yard or area around them must be enclosed by a fence of not less than five feet in height. Swimming pool fences (and pool locations) must comply with fence height restrictions as given in TMC [18.46.030](#).

(Ord. O2010-029, Amended, 06/07/2011; Ord. O97-024, Amended, 03/03/1998; Ord. 1144, Amended, 01/05/1988; Ord. 883, Added, 05/06/1984)

18.46.030 Fences – Height restrictions.

A. Residential Zones.

1. Front yard: forty-two inches maximum height. On corner lots, fences shall be limited to thirty-six inches in height for a distance of fifteen feet from the intersection of the property lines abutting the street, and to forty-two inches in height for the remainder of the front yards facing on both streets.

Fences may be permitted to a maximum height of seventy-eight inches from the ground in the front and/or side yard on a flanking street if the portion above thirty-six inches is composed of open work in such a manner that eighty percent of any portion can be seen through by oncoming traffic and pedestrians.

Fences for legally established agriculture uses may be permitted to a maximum height of ninety-six inches (eight feet) from the ground in the front yard provided the fence material is of a common deer fence type design. Examples of common deer fence designs include wire or polypropylene mesh with rectangular openings generally four inches by four inches in size. Barbed wire, electric charge, and sharp or pointed protrusions are not allowed on the ninety-six-inch (eight feet) fences. Additionally, the ninety-six-inch (eight feet) fences shall not be constructed of chain link, chicken wire, solid steel, solid wood, or other similar solid designs that do not allow the passage of air and light.

On through lots, a seventy-eight-inch fence may be allowed in one of the front yards, provided the following conditions can be met: (a) the fence will be located in the yard on the back side of the structure; (b) there is no street access from the end of the lot where the fence will be located; (c) the addition of the fence will not be detrimental to the neighborhood in terms of view, light, and air, nor injurious to traffic safety; (d) the fence will not appear obtrusive when compared to the rest of the block face on which it will be placed.

2. Side yards: seventy-eight inches; except fences for legally established agriculture uses may be permitted to a maximum height of ninety-six inches (eight feet) from the ground, provided, at a minimum, the portion of the fence above seventy-eight inches is composed of a fence material that is of a common deer fence type design. Examples of common deer fence designs include wire or polypropylene mesh with rectangular

openings generally four inches by four inches in size. Barbed wire, electric charge, and sharp or pointed protrusions are not allowed on the ninety-six-inch (eight feet) fences. Additionally, the ninety-six-inch (eight-foot) fences shall not be constructed of chain link or chicken wire.

3. Rear yards: seventy-eight inches; except fences for legally established agriculture uses may be permitted to a maximum height of ninety-six inches (eight feet) from the ground, provided, at a minimum, the portion of the fence above seventy-eight inches is composed of a fence material that is of a common deer fence type design. Examples of common deer fence designs include wire or polypropylene mesh with rectangular openings generally four inches by four inches in size. Barbed wire, electric charge, and sharp or pointed protrusions are not allowed on the ninety-six-inch (eight-foot) fences. Additionally, the ninety-six-inch (eight-foot) fences shall not be constructed of chain link or chicken wire.

B. Commercial and/or Industrial Zones.

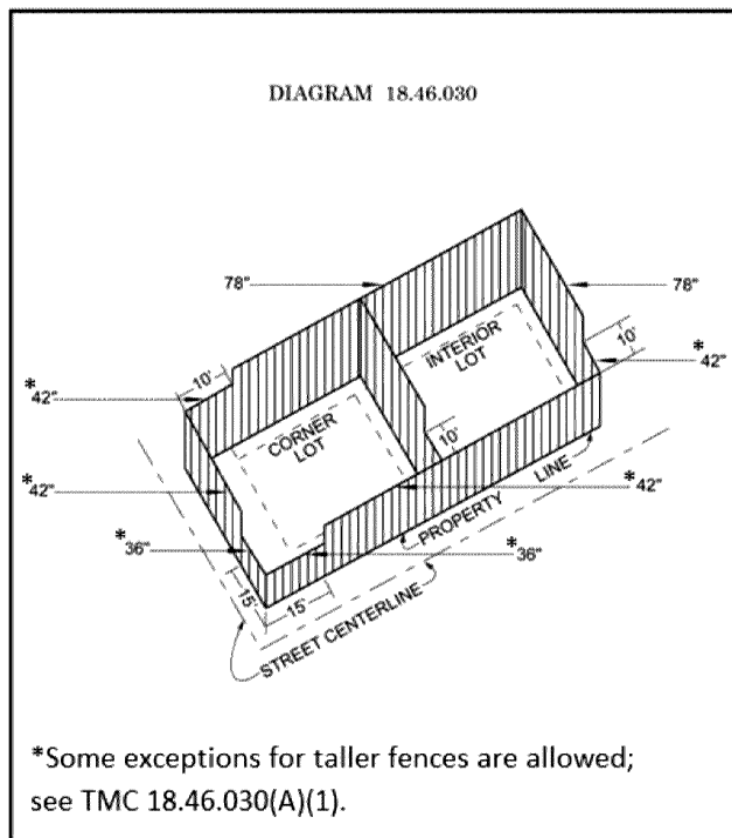
1. Front yard: forty-two inches maximum height. On corner lots, fences shall be limited to thirty-six inches in height for a distance of fifteen feet from the intersection of the property lines abutting the street, and to forty-two inches in height to the remainder of the front yards facing on both streets, except that fences may be permitted to a maximum height of seventy-eight inches from the ground in the front yard and/or side yard on a flanking street if the portion above thirty-six inches is composed of open work in such a manner that eighty percent of any portion is open to light and air. Fences for legally established agriculture uses may be permitted to a maximum height of ninety-six inches (eight feet) from the ground in the front yard, provided the fence material is of a common deer fence type design. Examples of common deer fence designs include wire or polypropylene mesh with rectangular openings generally four inches by four inches in size, excluding chain link. Barbed wire and electric charge are not allowed on the ninety-six-inch (eight-foot) fences. To avoid snagging or injuring animals, sharp or pointed protrusions are not allowed at the top of the fence. These ninety-six-inch (eight-foot) fences shall not be constructed of chain link, chicken wire, solid steel, solid wood, or other similar solid designs that do not allow the passage of air and light.

2. There is no maximum fence height limitation on fences located on the side or rear property lines.

C. Diagram 18.46.030 illustrates subsections A and B of this section.

D. Fencing for energy facilities such as substations, switching stations and natural gas gate stations and for city utility facilities shall satisfy fence height restrictions described in this section or, in lieu thereof, the utility may submit an alternative plan for review and approval.

(Ord. O2020-003, Amended, 09/15/2020; Ord. O2010-029, Amended, 06/07/2011; Ord. O2011-002, Amended, 03/01/2011; Ord. O2000-004, Amended, 07/18/2000; Ord. O97-024, Amended, 03/03/1998; Ord. 1172, Amended, 10/04/1988; Ord. 883, Added, 05/06/1984)



The Tumwater Municipal Code is current through Ordinance O2024-003, passed May 21, 2024.

Disclaimer: The city clerk's office has the official version of the Tumwater Municipal Code. Users should contact the city clerk's office for ordinances passed subsequent to the ordinance cited above.

[City of Tumwater Website](#)

City Telephone: [\(360\) 754-5855](#)

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