

## COMMERCIAL FENCES

All fence rules for residential properties also apply to business, commercial and industrial zoned properties, EXCEPT that:

1. Where the property is located in an industrial zoning district, the maximum height of any semi-transparent fence is 12 feet. Privacy fence located in the rear and interior sideyard may also be 12 feet in height.
2. Where the property is located in a business or office zoning district, the maximum height of a semi-transparent fence in the front yard is 4 feet, and in the corner sideyard is 6 feet. Privacy fences located in the interior and rear sideyard areas may be up to 6 feet in height.
3. Where the property is located in an industrial, commercial or office zoning district, all fences are subject to site plan review and vision obstruction regulations.
4. Fencing designed for public athletic facilities such as public swimming pools, tennis courts or baseball fields must conform with accepted ASTM industry standards. A permit is required for these installations.

Note: When the property is zoned business, commercial or industrial but the use is historically residential, this is a non-conforming, legal use of the property. These properties must comply with all residential fence ordinance requirements.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

***For a Fence Permit or more information on fence requirements, contact:***

Building Division, (608) 755-3060

***For an aerial view of your property, visit the City of Janesville GIS site:***

[Mapping Services | Janesville, WI](http://www.janesvillewi.gov)  
[janesvillewi.gov](http://www.janesvillewi.gov)

Choose "Public Site" and continue.

CALL DIGGERS HOTLINE

1-800-242-8511 OR

[www.diggershotline.com](http://www.diggershotline.com)

#### FOR RESIDENTIAL POOL-FENCE REQUIREMENTS:

Refer to brochure titled "Residential Swimming Pools, Hot Tubs/Spas".



Building Division, Department of Public Works

18 N. Jackson Street - 3rd floor  
Janesville, WI 53548

**Office Hours:** Monday-Friday

7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**(608) 755-3060**

Website: [www.janesvillewi.gov](http://www.janesvillewi.gov)

## Residential & Commercial

# FENCES



# Residential and Commercial Fence Requirements in the City of Janesville

## A Fence Permit is Required.

A fence permit is required for the installation or repair or replacement of any fence greater than 16 feet in length.

When submitting for a permit, you must provide a site plan which shows the property lines, adjoining streets, all structures on the property and the proposed location of your fence. Aerial views are available on the City's website at [Mapping Services | Janesville, WI \(janesvillewi.gov\)](http://Mapping_Services_Janesville_WI_(janesvillewi.gov)). Choose "Public Site" and continue into the interactive GIS mapping site.

A fence permit expires 1 year from issuance. Fences which are not completed within 1 year require another fence permit. (Fence permits issued prior to June 25, 2019 are good for 2 years.)

A fence permit is NOT required for: decorative fences that are 2 feet or less in height, underground pet fences, temporary fences for public safety (such as construction hazard zones) and chicken runs.

If your property is located in the Courthouse Hill Historic District, a fence permit cannot be issued until you've first received approval from the Janesville Historic Commission. To apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness, contact the Planning Division at 608-755-3085.

## Fence Definitions

**Privacy Fence:** A privacy fence is one which is opaque or provides 0 to less than 50 percent visibility through the fence. The degree of visibility is measured by the open space through which light is able to pass through the fence. Visibility is measured through one or multiple planes of fencing. Privacy fences located within the front and corner side yard setbacks may be no greater than 30 inches in height. Privacy fences are permitted within the interior side and rear yard setback areas, subject to all other ordinance provisions.

**Semi-transparent fence:** A semi-transparent fence is one which provides 50 percent or greater visibility through the fence. Examples: chainlink, wrought iron, picket. The degree of visibility is measured by the open space through which light is able to pass through the fence. Visibility is measured through one or multiple planes of fencing. Semi-transparent fences are permitted within all setback areas, subject to all other ordinance provisions.

## Fence Installation

1. All structural members (ie. posts) must face into the yard where the fence is being installed and the finished side shall face your neighbor.
2. There are no requirements for an approved fence to be setback from the property lines; however, all parts of the fence (including footings) must be installed completely on your property. It is the owner's responsibility to locate the property lines. When neighbors disagree on the location of a property line, this is a civil matter and the City is not involved in finding resolution. When neighbors decide to share a fence on the property line, it is strongly suggested that a written agreement or deed restriction is recorded at the Rock County Register of Deeds for the benefit of future property owners.
3. **NO FENCE MAY OBSTRUCT** the view of pedestrian or vehicular traffic. Vision triangle rules apply to fences which are located near intersections, driveways and alleyways.
4. No fence may be placed within the city terrace or public right-of-way, including greenbelts.
5. Effective June 25, 2019, a 6 foot tall privacy fence may be installed up to the rear property line facing a state or federal highway, county trunk highway, or town road as determined by the Chief Building Official. (Prior to this date, a privacy fence was required to be set back 25 feet from the rear property line facing the highway.)

## Fence Maintenance

Fences shall be maintained in a manner so as to prevent rust, corrosion, and deterioration, so as not to become a public or private nuisance, and so as not to be dilapidated or a danger to adjoining property owners or the public. Fences shall not create an appearance of patchwork, which is indicative of a state of disrepair. Every fence installed shall be maintained in such a way that it will remain in good repair. A property owner or occupant of the property on which the fence is located shall be responsible for the maintenance of the fence.

## Residential Fence Height

**FRONT YARD FENCES:** Any fence located in the front yard may not exceed 4 feet in height (effective date June 25, 2019). Front yard *privacy* fences may be no taller than 30 inches in height. All other front yard fences must be *semi-transparent* (at least 50% open).

**CORNER SIDE YARD FENCES:** Any semi-transparent fence located in the side yard facing a street cannot exceed 6 feet in height. A privacy fence in this location may not exceed 30 inches in height. Exception: Properties which are located in the R2 Zoning District may place a privacy fence up to 6 feet tall, halfway within the corner side yard, subject to vision triangle regulations.

**REAR YARD FENCES:** Fences located in the rear yard may be privacy or semi-transparent and may not exceed 6 feet in height.

## Residential Fence Materials

**Materials Permitted:** fences which are manufactured for residential use such as aluminum, wrought iron or similar decorative steel, chain-link, wood and vinyl. Opaque metals of any kind are prohibited.

Temporary fences are allowed only for a special event, hazard or construction warning and shall be removed within 24 hours after the conclusion of the special event or when the condition or season for which the fence was erected no longer exists. Temporary fencing may not be used to enclose yard space on a property.

**Materials Prohibited:** opaque metals, snow fence, any wire fence of 13 gauge or less thickness, pallets, tree trunks, tires, junk or similar items, railroad ties, wood doors, utility poles, vertical fences without cross members. Hazardous fences such as barbed wire, electric, razor wire or agricultural fencing materials are prohibited.

**POOL FENCE REQUIREMENTS:** Refer to brochure titled "Residential Pools, Hot Tubs/Spas and Fences".