

Retaining Wall

Type: All Construction

Subtype: RESIDENTIAL/ NON-RESIDENTIAL

Revised: 01.2025

City of Tukwila - Permit Center

6300 Southcenter Blvd, Suite 100

Tukwila, WA 98188

www.tukwilawa.gov/departments/permit-center/



PERMIT EXEMPTIONS

In accordance with section 105 of the current Washington State Building Codes, each retaining wall constructed in the City of Tukwila requires a building permit, with a few permit exemptions listed below.

- All retaining walls constructed shall have a minimum of a 12-inch embedment into the soil, to anchor and be supported below the frost depth for our region.
- Please note that ornamental designs anchored to the wall will be included in the total height when determining if a permit is required.
- No retaining wall placed in a Critical Area in accordance with TMC 18.45 shall be exempt from permit.

Applicable Regulations:

- [Title 16 Tukwila Municipal Code](#)
- [Title 18 Tukwila Municipal Code](#)
- [WAC 19.27 State Building Code](#)
- [Washington State Building Code Council](#)

Resources:

- [Tukwila Permit Center](#)

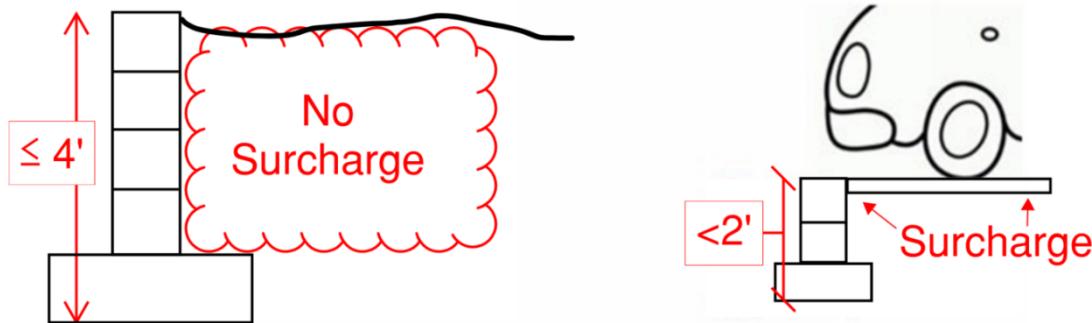
EXEMPTIONS

The following exemptions from permit may apply to your project:

1. Retaining walls not over 4 feet tall are exempt from permit, unless supporting a surcharge that is within a 45-degree angle of the bottom of the footing. This exemption does not apply to engineered systems.
 - a. *No retaining wall that is more than 36 inches above finished grade shall be exempt from permit.*
2. Retaining walls less than 24 inches in height and are supporting a surcharge are exempt from building permit.
 - a. *No retaining wall that is more than 12 inches above finished grade and supporting a surcharge shall be exempt from permit.*

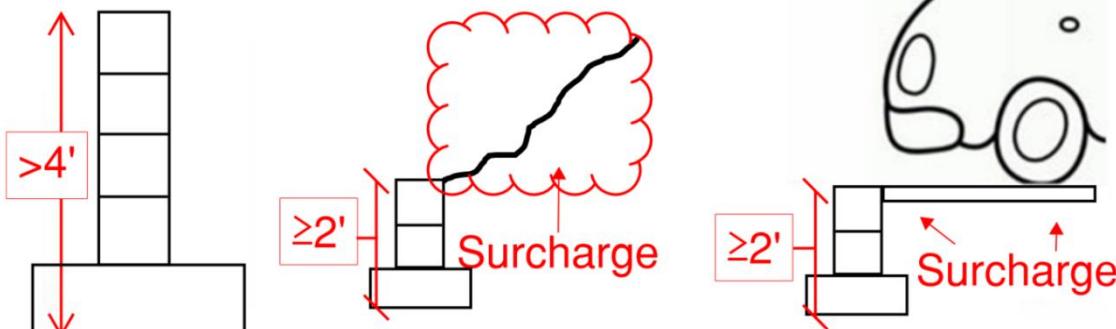
NO PERMIT REQUIRED

Walls up to 4 feet in height (measured to the bottom of the footing) without a surcharge and walls up to 2 feet in height supporting a surcharge.



PERMIT REQUIRED

Walls over 4 feet in height (measured to the bottom of the footing) without a surcharge and walls with a surcharge over 2 feet in height.



Note: All retaining walls must be properly drained; International Residential Code, Section R404.4