



TOWN FENCE ORDINANCE

Section 29.40.030. Fences, walls, gates, gateways, entry arbors, and hedges.

Section 29.40.0305. Intent.

The intent of these fence regulations, as defined in section 29.40.0310, is to preserve the natural beauty of the Town of Los Gatos, the natural movement of wildlife, and to protect traffic view areas while acknowledging that residents have the right to fence their properties to protect children, contain their animals, protect garden or agricultural areas, and maintain privacy. Specifically, within the hillside area, the intent of these fence regulations is to allow for the movement of wildlife. Unless specified otherwise, these fence regulations are applicable Town-wide. These fence regulations incorporate portions of the Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines related to fencing.

Sec. 29.40.0310. Definitions.

The following words, terms, and phrases, when used in these fence regulations, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section:

Buck and rail fence means a fence constructed with wood rails where the posts are arranged to form a triangle to provide the vertical structure of the fence. The horizontal rails are then attached to the triangle support posts.

Corner sight triangle means a triangular area at street intersections having sides thirty (30) feet in length, as measured from intersecting property lines.

Double fence means two (2) fences spaced a few feet apart regardless of height and material.

Driveway view area means a triangular area at the intersection of driveways and sidewalks and street intersections having sides ten (10) feet in length, as measured along the driveway's path of travel from the back of the sidewalk or street.

Fence means a structure constructed of posts, rails, wire, and/or barrier panels, used to define a boundary or as a means of protection, confinement, or visual obstruction.

Fence regulations means sections 29.40.030 through 29.40.0330.

Hillside area means all properties located within the area defined by the Hillside Area Map as contained in the Town of Los Gatos Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines.

Open view fence means a fence constructed in such a way so that no more than twenty (20) percent of the surface area of the fence obstructs a view through the fence from a position perpendicular to the fence.

Perimeter fence means a fence located on the property line of a lot.

Riparian corridor means an area comprised of habitat strongly influenced and delineated by the presence of perennial or intermittent streams.

Solid fence means a fence constructed in such a way so that more than twenty (20) percent of the surface area of the fence obstructs a view through the fence from a position perpendicular to the fence.

Traffic view area means the area which is within fifteen (15) feet of a street and within two hundred (200) feet of the right-of-way line of an intersection.

Wildlife-friendly fence means a fence that allows any animal, regardless of size, to climb under, pass through, or jump over, with a maximum height of forty-two (42) inches and a minimum distance between the bottom rail and the ground of eighteen (18) inches.

Section 29.40.0315. Height, materials and design, and location.

(a) *Height.*

- (1) Fences, walls, gates, or hedges may not exceed six (6) feet in height, with one (1) foot of lattice on top (seven (7) feet high in total); except as provided in subsections (2), (3), and (4) below.
- (2) In the hillside area:
 - a. Fences, walls, gates, or hedges may not exceed six (6) feet.
 - b. On properties one (1) acre or greater, perimeter fencing shall be a wildlife-friendly fence as defined in section 29.40.0310.
- (3) Fences, walls, gates, and hedges may not exceed three (3) feet in height when located within a required front or side yard abutting a street (as required by the zone), driveway view area, traffic view area, or corner sight triangle unless an exception is granted by the Town Engineer and Community Development Director. Trees, hedges, and vegetation within a corner sight triangle shall meet the requirements of section 26.10.065.
- (4) Pedestrian gateways or entryway arbors may be up to eight (8) feet high. No more than one (1) gateway or entryway arbor per street frontage is allowed.

(b) *Materials and design.*

- (1) The following fence types and materials are prohibited:
 - a. Any fence with bare lengths of wire stretched between posts.
 - b. Electric fences, including any fence designed to produce an electric shock.
 - c. Barbed or razor wire fences, including any fence with attached barbs, sharp points, or razors.
 - d. Transparent fences such as barriers of glass or clear plastic.
- (2) In the hillside area:
 - a. Fences located within twenty (20) feet of a property line adjacent to a street shall be open view fencing as defined in section 29.40.0310.
 - b. On properties one (1) acre or greater, perimeter fencing shall be a wildlife-friendly fence as defined in section 29.40.0310.
 - c. Chainlink, welded wire, wire mesh, or similar material shall be coated with green, brown, or black vinyl or finish and shall be supported by a wood frame.
 - d. Buck and rail, double, and solid fences are prohibited.
- (3) In the Landmark and Historic Preservation Overlay:
 - a. Plastic fencing is prohibited.
 - b. Fences located in a required front yard shall be open view.
- (4) Pedestrian gateways or entryway arbors shall be open view. A gateway or entryway arbor shall have a maximum width of six (6) feet and a maximum depth of four (4) feet.

(c) *Location.*

- (1) No fence, wall, or gate shall be located within emergency egress easements.
- (2) No fence, wall, or gate shall be located within twenty (20) feet of a riparian corridor as defined in section 29.40.0310.
- (3) Vehicular gates shall be set back from the edge of the adjacent street a minimum of eighteen (18) feet as measured along the centerline of the driveway. A greater setback may be required when a gated entrance serves more than one (1) house.

Section 29.40.0320. Exceptions.

An exception to any of these fence regulations may be granted by the Community Development Director. A fence exception application and fee shall be filed with the Community Development Department and shall provide written justification that demonstrates one (1) of the following conditions exist:

- (a) Adjacent to commercial property, perimeter fences or walls may be eight (8) feet if requested or agreed upon by a majority of the adjacent residential property owners.
- (b) On interior lots, side yard and rear yard fences, walls, gates, gateways, entry arbors, or hedges, behind the front yard setback, may be a maximum of eight (8) feet high provided the property owner can provide written justification that either:
 - (1) A special privacy concern exists that cannot be practically addressed by additional landscaping or tree screening; or
 - (2) A special wildlife/animal problem affects the property that cannot be practically addressed through alternatives. Documented instances of wildlife grazing on gardens or ornamental landscaping may be an example of such a problem.
- (c) At public utility facilities, critical infrastructure, and emergency access locations, exceptions may be granted where strict enforcement of these regulations will result in a security or safety concern.
- (d) A special security concern exists that cannot be practically addressed through alternatives.
- (e) A special circumstance exists, including lot size or configuration, where strict enforcement of these regulations would result in undue hardship.

Section 29.40.0325. Exemptions.

All fences, hedges, gates, and walls existing on the effective date of this ordinance [from which this section derives] that do not meet the regulations contained herein are nonconforming and are exempt from these regulations. Existing nonconforming fences may be maintained and/or replaced in kind, including historic stone or river rock walls.

Section 29.40.0330. Penalties.

A property owner who has unlawfully constructed any fence, wall, gate, gateway, entry arbor, or hedge is subject to applicable enforcement and penalties as described in sections 29.20.930 through 29.20.965 of the Town Code.

WORK EXEMPT FROM BUILDING PERMITS

2016 CALIFORNIA BUILDING CODE—APPENDIX CHAPTER 1, SECTION 105.2

2016 CALIFORNIA BUILDING CODE - APPENDIX CHAPTER 1, SECTION 105.2

105.2 Work Exempt from Permit. Exemptions from permit requirements of this code shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any work to be done in any manner in violation of the provisions of this code or any other laws or ordinances of this jurisdiction. Permits shall not be required for the following:

Building:

1. One-story detached accessory structures, provided that the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet (11.15 m²).
2. Fences not over 7 feet (2134 mm) high. **(Contact the Planning Division for additional restrictions as they may apply).**
3. Oil derricks.
4. Retaining walls that are not over 4 feet (1219 mm) in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge (i.e. water, dirt, sand, etc.).
5. Sidewalks and driveways (require Encroachment Permit from Engineering Dept.).
6. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops and similar finish work.
7. Prefabricated swimming pools that are less than 24 inches (610 mm) deep.
8. Swings and other playground equipment.
9. Window awnings supported by an exterior wall that do not project more than 54 inches (1372 mm) from the exterior wall and do not require additional support.
10. Decks not exceeding 200 square feet (18.58 m²) in area, that are not more than 30 inches (762 mm) above grade at any point, are not attached to a dwelling and do not serve the exit door required by Section R311.4.

Electrical:

1. Listed cord-plug connected temporary decorative lighting.
2. Reinstallation of attachment plug receptacles but not the outlets therefor.
3. Replacement of branch circuit overcurrent devices of the required capacity in the same location.
4. Electrical wiring, devices, appliances, apparatus or equipment operating at less than 25 volts and not capable of supplying more than 50 watts of energy.
5. Minor repair work, including the replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles.

Gas:

1. Portable heating, cooking or clothes drying appliances.
2. Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.
3. Portable-fuel-cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid.

Mechanical:

1. Portable heating appliance.
2. Portable ventilation equipment.
3. Portable cooling unit.
4. Steam, hot or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment regulated by this code.
5. Replacement of any part that does not alter its approval or make it unsafe.
6. Portable evaporative cooler.
7. Self-contained refrigeration system containing 10 pounds (4.54 kg) or less of refrigerant and actuated by motors of 1 horsepower (746 W) or less.
8. Portable-fuel-cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid

Plumbing:

1. The stopping of leaks in drains, water, soil, waste or vent pipe, provided, however, that if any concealed trap, drain pipe, water, soil, waste or vent pipe becomes defective and it becomes necessary to remove and replace the same with the new material, such work shall be considered as new work and a permit shall be obtained and inspection made as provided in this code.