



Hillside Overlay Fence & Wall Inspections

In accordance with Article 41, Chapter 1, Division 9 of the Torrance Municipal Code, the Community Development Director may grant an exemption from the discretionary review process for the construction of new fences and walls on properties located within the Hillside and Local Coastal Overlay Zone upon determining there is no potential for a significant adverse effect on the view, light, air, and privacy of other properties in the vicinity, and there is no significant public controversy thereon.

As part of the building permit application process, applicants are required to complete a pre-construction site inspection with the Planning Division to assess the potential impacts a proposed fence or wall may have on properties in the vicinity. Upon completion of the site inspection, the applicant will be informed: (a) there are no potential impacts and the building permit application can proceed; or (b) there are potential impacts and that additional review and permitting is necessary in the form of a Minor Hillside Exemption (MHE) permit, and the building permit application will be placed on hold until an MHE is approved.

LOCATION, HEIGHT, AND MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants are required to install a mason line that represents the outline (silhouette) of the proposed fence or wall to demonstrate the potential impacts a proposed fence or wall may have on other properties in the vicinity. A clearly visible bright color mason line must be tightly strung between the most distant corners to represent the full height and length of the proposed fence or wall. Installation of the mason line must account for changes in height as well as changes in grading elevation. At the discretion of the Planning Manager, installation of story poles and additional materials may be required to fully illustrate the scope of work such as tape, netting, ribbon, or other type of flagging.

The mason line must be installed prior to scheduling the pre-construction site inspection and may be removed after staff has completed the inspection. A mason line associated with an inactive building permit application that has been withdrawn or placed on hold must be removed after 6 months of inactivity unless extended at the discretion of the Planning Manager. Inaction to remove the mason line may result in Code Enforcement action.

PLOT PLAN REQUIRED

At the time of building permit submittal, applicants are required to prepare a plot plan that illustrates the general location of the proposed fence or wall, dimensions for length, height, and width, and the general placement of structures at the property (e.g., primary dwelling, detached garage). The plot plan does not need to be drawn to scale but must be legible and page size no less than 8.5-inches by 11-inches.

At the discretion of the Planning Manager, applicants may be required to submit a detailed project plan that illustrates the precise location of the proposed fence or wall and that includes the property address, contact information, scope of work, dimensions for length, height, and width, materials description, property boundaries and orientation, and placement of structures at the property (e.g., primary dwelling, detached garage). The detailed project plan must be drawn to scale and legible, minimum 12-point font, and page size no less than 11-inches by 17-inches. An electronic copy of the project plan (PDF) must be submitted through email or USB drive. Inaccurate or incomplete project plans will not be accepted. The pre-construction site inspection cannot be scheduled until the detailed project plan has been submitted for review and deemed complete by staff.

PRE-CONSTRUCTION SITE INSPECTION

Applicants are required to contact the Planning Division to schedule a pre-construction site inspection to assess the potential impacts that a proposed fence or wall may have on the view, light, air, and privacy of other properties in the vicinity. Applicants must provide staff with access to the property during business hours and must be present during the site inspection. At the discretion of the Planning Manager, in lieu of the site inspection other forms of visual aid may be accepted to complete the assessment, such as photo simulations and models.

Inspection fees are collected at the time of building permit submittal and paid directly with the Building & Safety Division. Inspections are scheduled by contacting the Planning Division at (310) 618-5990 or by visiting the Permit Center (Development Review) located at 3031 Torrance Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90503, open 8:00am to 5:00pm, Monday through Thursday, open alternate Fridays.

STAFF CHECKLIST

- STEP 1:** Verify the project site is located within the Hillside Overlay and verify the building permit application includes the project plans (or plot plan) and other visual aids (if applicable).

The plot plan must illustrate the general location of the proposed fence or wall, dimensions for length, height, and width, and the general placement of structures at the property (e.g., primary dwelling, detached garage). The plot plan does not need to be drawn to scale but must be legible and page size no less than 8.5-inches by 11-inches.

At the discretion of the Planning Manager, applicants may be required to submit a detailed project plan that illustrates the precise location of the proposed fence or wall and that includes the property address, contact information, scope of work, dimensions for length, height, and width, materials description, property boundaries and orientation, and placement of structures at the property (e.g., primary dwelling, detached garage). The detailed project plan must be drawn to scale and legible, minimum 12-point font, and page size no less than 11-inches by 17-inches. An electronic copy of the project plan (PDF) must be submitted through email or USB drive. Inaccurate or incomplete project plans will not be accepted. The pre-construction site inspection cannot be scheduled until the detailed project plan has been submitted for review and deemed complete by staff.

- STEP 2:** Schedule a pre-construction site inspection to assess the potential impacts that a proposed fence or wall may have on the view, light, air, and privacy of other properties in the vicinity.

Applicants must provide staff with access to the property during business hours and must be present during the site inspection. At the discretion of the Planning Manager, in lieu of the site inspection other forms of visual aid may be accepted to complete the assessment, such as photo simulations and models.

- STEP 3:** Conduct a pre-construction site inspection with a colleague (if available) to assess the potential impacts that a proposed fence or wall may have on the view, light, air, and privacy of other properties in the vicinity.

A clearly visible bright color mason line must be tightly strung between the most distant corners to represent the full height and length of the proposed fence or wall. Installation of the mason line must account for changes in height as well as changes in grading elevation.

- STEP 4:** Upon completion of the site inspection, inform the applicant that either:

- a) There are no potential impacts and the exemption from discretionary review is granted and the building permit application can proceed; or
- b) There are potential impacts and additional review and permitting is necessary in the form of a Minor Hillside Exemption (MHE) permit and the building permit application will be placed on hold until an MHE is approved.

- STEP 5:** Utilize the Accela platform to update the building permit workflow and return the building permit application packet to the Building & Safety Division. Continue with the MHE process if applicable.

END OF STAFF CHECKLIST