

RETAINING WALL INFORMATION SHEET

On sloping sites, it is common to alter the natural levels by cut and fill to create a level building platform or for landscaping. Retaining walls can be made from various materials – timber, rock linking concrete blocks, etc, and many require a building approval, certified structural engineer design and in some cases a planning approval also.

The following requirements apply:

- All fill placed on site shall be stabilised and drained in an approved manner to prevent any resulting damage to the subject property or adjoining property. The filling of your land may also require Council approval.
- Precautions shall be taken to prevent earth fill including waterborne material (erosion) encroaching onto adjacent land (both public and private) or against boundary fences. (Note: a fence is not designed as a retaining wall).
- Retaining walls with a surcharge loading and a height in excess of one metre (1m) above the adjoining ground level will require an application for approval of building work. The application is to be supported by a design certified by a Registered Professional Engineer of Queensland (RPEQ).

MP1.1 & MP 1.2 of the Queensland Development Code – setback requirements for retaining walls where above natural ground level.

- The side and rear boundary clearance for a part of the building or structure is –
 - (i) where the height of that part is 4.5m or less – 1.5m; and
 - (ii) where the height of that part is greater than 4.5m but not more than 7.5m – 2m;and
- (iii) where the height of that part is greater than 7.5m – 2m plus 0.5m for every 3m or part exceeding 7.5m.

You are advised to check with Council prior to commencing earthworks or construction.

- Retaining walls must be built to good engineering design and practices to withstand the combination of loads and other actions to which it may be reasonably subjected, regardless of whether or not the retaining wall requires a building approval.
- Generally Earth batters to excavations and embankments or cut and fill are not to exceed slope of 1:4 without some form of stabilisation.
- Adequate methods must be employed to control surface water drainage and seepage by implementing good design and installing proper drainage systems, so as to prevent both nuisance and damage to adjoining properties and structures.

Note: Common law rights exist to protect neighbouring property owners.

Where there is a sudden change of level exceeding one metre (1m) then an approved barrier (eg: fence wall or balustrade) complying with the Building Code of Australia (BCA) performance requirements P2.5.2 is to be provided along the upper level to prevent people from falling.

A fence combined with a retaining wall is not to exceed two metres (2m) in height measured from above the natural ground level. A relaxation approval is required where this limit is exceeded. Approval is not automatic each case is assessed individually depending upon the situation.

- A berm width (ie: horizontal distance between retaining walls) as determined from the following table is recommended where retaining walls are to be built terrace style.

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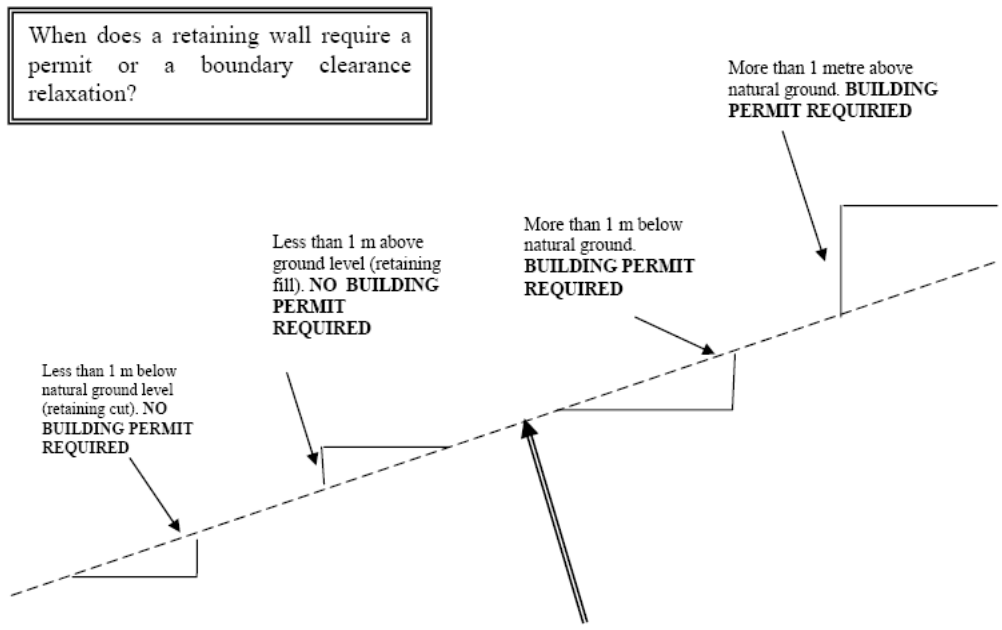
What do you need to do to apply for approval?

✓ Tick when completed

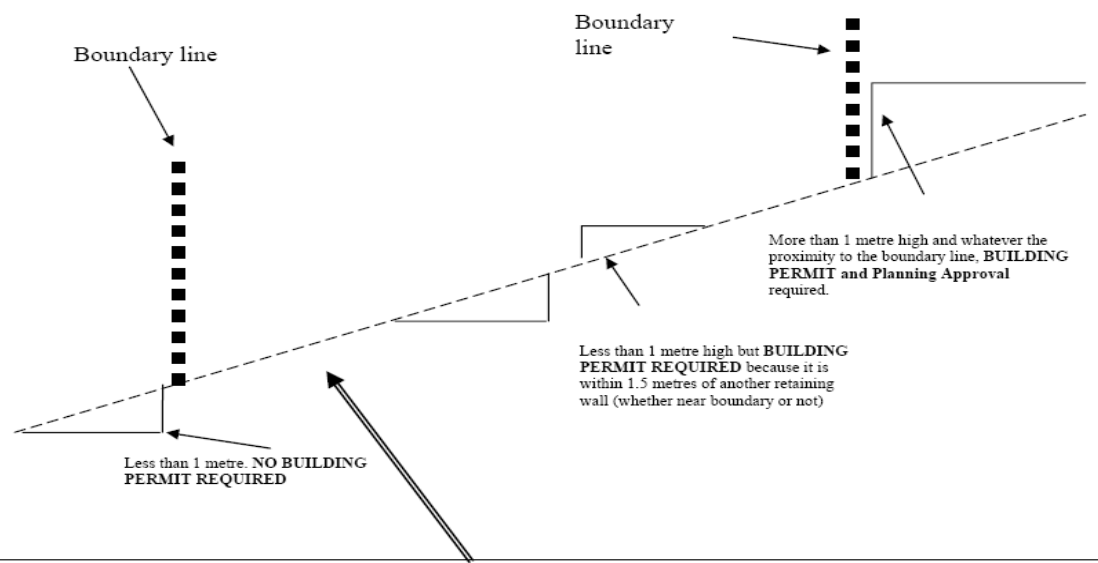
- If building approval is required then complete the Building application form 1 and form 2
- Lodge application including (3) three copies of plans showing:
 - Construction details for the wall
 - Materials used
 - Certification by Engineer
 - Pay for Applicable fees

Information and application forms can be obtained from Gympie Regional Council's Planning & Development Department

PO Box 155
Gympie QLD 4570
Phone: 1300 307 800
Fax: (07) 5481 0801
ABN: 91 269 530 353



Natural ground level (level of the ground before cut and fill was carried out for (privately built) retaining walls)



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