

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY

Lorraine Cochran-Johnson
Chief Executive Officer

Juliana A. Njoku
Director

Retaining Wall Plan Review Checklist

Retaining walls that are four (4) feet or more in height from bottom of footing to top of wall and retaining walls that supports a surcharge load of any height shall require a separate building permit prior to construction. The following information shall be provided at the time of submittal.

1. The construction drawings (as least 3 full-size or half-size sets per the commercial checklist) shall be stamped and sealed by a professional engineer in responsible charge.
2. Provide soils investigation or soil report stamped and signed by a licensed Geotechnical Engineer that includes but shall not be limited to allowable soil bearing pressure, equivalent lateral fluid pressure (active and passive) surcharge load, internal angle of friction, coefficient of friction and soil density.
3. Submit copy of county approved site and grading plans which clearly indicates the retaining walls heights from top of wall to top of footing (bottom of wall) and finished grade; also, its location from the property line, right-of-way, and adjacent structures and vegetation.¹
4. Provide complete structural details and structural design calculations for each retaining wall which clearly specify required materials, wall and footing dimensions, reinforcing, concrete strength, drainage method for relief of hydrostatic pressure, type of backfill material and slope of backfill finished grade.
5. Cast-in-place concrete retaining walls, including footings, shall not encroach over property line and shall not be within the right-of-way.¹
6. For mechanically stabilized earth (MSE) modular walls (segmental retaining walls), details shall clearly show spacing and embedment length of all geogrid reinforcement.¹
7. Show on the site plan the extent of the geo-grid reinforcement system embedment length. The geo-grid reinforcement system shall not encroach over property line and shall not be within the right-of-way.¹
8. Provide retaining wall structural design calculation report showing the factors of safety per IBC 2018 section 1807.2.3 and IRC 2018 section R404.4 for single-family residential sites.
9. The retaining wall shall comply with IBC 2018 section 1610.1 and IRC 2018 section R404.4 for single-family residential sites to resist lateral soil loads.
10. The drawings shall show fall prevention elements such as but not limited to fences, guards, etc. at the top of retaining walls where the vertical distance from grade below to top of wall exceeds 30 inches or as directed by the code official.
11. Provide "Structural Retaining Wall Certificate" that has been completed by the licensed engineer and submit it along with the retaining wall application. (If applicable, see DeKalb Document folder in ePlans for those documents or ask the permit technician prior to the permit application submittal)
12. Existing retaining walls may be repaired and replaced so long as the height of the repaired or replaced wall is no greater than the original height of the wall.¹

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¹(No encroachment is authorized and no encroaching walls including footing permitted without appropriate recorded easement for offsite work; however, a construction/maintenance easement shall be obtained from the adjoining property owner, if applicable)

After the work on the retaining walls have been completed, fill out the Engineer's Certificate entitled "AS-BUILT STRUCTURAL RETAINING WALL" and return it to DeKalb County permitting office to obtain a certificate of completion.

For further information see DeKalb County, Georgia – Code of Ordinances / Chapter 27 – ZONING / ARTICLE 5. SITE DESIGN AND BUILDING FORM STANDARDS Sec. 5.4.7. - Walls, fences, and retaining walls (version dated: December 12, 2017).

To be used for information only.