

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

Fences

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Fences 8 feet or less in height, constructed of any material other than masonry or concrete, **DO NOT** require a building permit.

The following fences are **PROHIBITED**:

- Razor Wire
- Barbed Wire
- Electric fences other than those permitted by Ch. 28 City Code

BEFORE PURSUING THE BUILDING PERMIT

Before beginning any work, answering the questions below will help with the permitting process.

Is a contractor doing the work?

There are many ways to ensure that you are working with a good contractor. The City of Houston does not license building contractors, but there are several voluntary trade organizations where you can find lists of them. You can also check the Better Business Bureau (www.bbb.org) for business reviews, alerts and tips. Be sure to always check references and ensure that your contractor is properly insured.

Have you verified any deed restrictions that may be attached to your property?

Deed restrictions are written agreements that restrict or limit the use or activities that may take place on a property in a subdivision. You may purchase a copy from the County Clerk's Office, but your civic club may also have copies of your subdivision's deed restrictions. Be sure to check for any deed restrictions that exist before beginning any construction projects.

Are you aware of any Homeowners Association (HOA) restrictions?

HOAs sometimes place restrictions on the types of construction that can occur, so be sure to check with your HOA before beginning any construction projects.

Do you know where your property line begins and ends?

Prior to starting your project, make sure you know exactly where your property line begins and ends to ensure that your structure can be built in the proposed location.



HELPFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

Flood maps:

www.gims.houstontx.gov

Deed Restrictions:

Harris County Clerk's Office
201 Caroline 3rd Floor
Houston, TX 77002
713-755-6405

Montgomery County
Clerk's Office
210 West Davis (Hwy 105)
Conroe, TX 77301
936-539-7885

Fort Bend County Clerk's Office
301 Jackson Street
Richmond, TX 77469
281-341-8652

COH Deed Restrictions Hotline
(Complaints) 832-393-6333

Harris County Appraisal District:
www.hcad.org

Montgomery Central Appraisal
District: <http://www.mcad-tx.org>

Fort Bend Central Appraisal District:
<http://www.fbcad.org>

Easement Encroachment Contacts:

Harris County Flood Control District
(HCFCD)
9900 Northwest Freeway
Houston, TX 77092
713-684-4000

Harris County Flood Control District
Watershed Coordinator
713-956-3074

Harris County Flood Control District
Property Management
713-684-4000

Center Point Energy Land & Right-of-
Way Department (TRT-11)
PO Box 1700
Houston, TX 77251-1700
Attention: Julie Bray 713-207-1557
Linsey Williams 713-207-6211

Southwestern Bell Telephone
Company (SBC) Right-of-Way
7602 Spring Cypress, Room #226
Spring, TX 77379
Jerry Ray 281-379-7524 or Amanda
Burus 281-379-7518

Have you verified your property's setback requirements?

A setback is a specific distance that your house or any structure built on your property must be from the City's Right of Way, easements or homes/structures that are adjacent to your property. Setback requirements change over time so make sure you know the setback requirements before you start planning your project.

Is your property in the 100-year floodplain or floodway?

Prior to starting your project, visit www.gims.houstontx.gov to determine if your property is located in the 100-year floodplain or floodway. If you have flood insurance you can also contact your insurance provider for this information as well.

Will your project encroach on an easement?

You will be required to obtain an exemption from the Office of the City Engineer if your project encroaches on any portion of the street or roadway easement. You will be required to apply for Consent to Easement Encroachment through the Utility Analysis - Developer Services Section if your project encroaches on a City of Houston utility easement. If you have questions regarding this, please contact Sarun Chhin at 832-394-8986.

NOTE: *If the easement is dedicated to the Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD), you must have your plans approved by HCFCD prior to obtaining a permit from the City. If your easement is dedicated to a utility company, you will need to obtain a release from the utility company. Contacts for utility company easement questions can be found in the left hand column on this page.*

Fences can only be constructed on your property**What is the total cost of your project?**

The estimated project cost will be needed in order to complete the building permit application. (See page 5 for more information.)

DEFINITIONS**CONVEYANCE ZONE**

The portion of the Special Flood Hazard Area that is utilized to convey water during the occurrence of the base flood. Areas in a floodplain where natural ground is 18 inches below base flood elevation or are within 100 feet of the floodway are defined as conveyance zones.

DEED RESTRICTIONS

Written agreements that restrict or limit the use or activities that may take place on a property in a subdivision. Deed restrictions come with the property and cannot be changed or removed by subsequent owners.

EASEMENT

Areas set aside for installation and maintenance of utilities by public and private utility operators. You cannot typically build on these areas because they would limit access to the utilities.

FLOODPLAIN

Land area around a stream, river or bayou that would be affected by flooding during a "100-year event" (a rainstorm that has a 1% chance of occurring in a given year), because the water is no longer contained within the banks of the stream, river or bayou during or after that event. In the City of Houston, this area has been mapped throughout the City and can be found on the GIMS (Geographic Information & Management System) website. www.gims.houstontx.gov The floodplain is also known as "A" zones on flood insurance maps produced by FEMA. "A" zones include Zone A, Zone AE and Zone AO.

FLOODWAY

The area for storm runoff along a bayou, river, or other watercourse. In the City of Houston, this area has been mapped throughout the City and can be found on the GIMS website. www.gims.houstontx.gov

HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION

An organization created by a group of property owners, or property developers which helps to oversee any shared property belonging to the homeowner group, and which usually has a legal means of enforcing agreed upon rules the homeowners must follow.

LOT LINE

A line dividing one lot from another, or from a street or any public place.

MASONRY

Solid mortared units of stone, brick, block, glass or clay.

PROJECT COST

This includes the total cost of construction to the end user, excluding the land purchase costs and the overhead attributed to the land purchase. It also includes the value of donated goods and services.

SETBACK

A specific distance your house or any structure built on your property must be from the City's Right of Way, easements or homes/structures adjacent to your property. Setback requirements may change over time.

KEY CONTACTS

Houston Permitting Center

Hours of Operation:
8:00 am – 5:00 pm

1002 Washington Ave.
Houston, TX 77002

Phone: 832-394-9000
Email: houston.permittingcenter@houstontx.gov

Building Code Enforcement Permits

Hours of Operation:
8:00am – 5:00pm

Contact Information:
Phone: 832-394-9494
Email: rmcacad@houstontx.gov

Traffic Plan Review

Hours of Operation:
8:00 am – 4:00 pm

Contact Information:
Phone: 832-394-8851 or 832-394-9387
Email: Kumar.Arya@houstontx.gov or
Lakeisha.Henderson@houstontx.gov

Planning and Development Plan Review

Hours of Operation:
8:00am – 4:00pm

Contact Information:
Phone: 832-394-8849
Email: pd.planning@houstontx.gov

Floodplain Management Office

Hours of Operation:
8:00am – 4:30pm

Contact Information:
Phone: 832-394-8854
Email: fmo@houstontx.gov

Inspections

General Number..... 713-222-9922
Flood..... 832-394-8854
Structural 832-394-8840
Electrical 832-394-8860

WHAT SPECIAL CONDITIONS EXIST?

The following items represent the special conditions that must be considered as you prepare your plans:

- Fences over 8 feet in height require a building permit.
- Fences with masonry 2 feet high or any fence over 8 feet must be designed (by a Texas registered professional engineer) for 110 mph wind speed with a 3 second gust factor.
- Drilled piers are not allowed on easements.

Planning and Development Department

The Planning and Development Department is responsible for reviewing any fence that is at the front of a property.

Traffic & Transportation Section

Fences with front gates must obtain plan approval from Traffic Plan Review.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR BUILDING PERMIT APPROVAL **Building Permit Application Form**

This form should be completed prior to arriving at the Houston Permitting Center (HPC).

 Deed Restriction Affidavit

The deed restriction affidavit must be signed by the owner and notarized. Notaries are available free of charge at the HPC. Please do not sign the document without a notary present.

 Two Complete Sets of Plans Drawn to Scale

- Site Plan drawn to scale and showing the existing property lines, easements, building setback lines, and showing the location of the proposed fence.
- Structural section plan designed by a Texas registered professional engineer is required for fences with over 2 feet high masonry, brick or concrete.
- Identify the material for fencing and columns
- Provide the height elevation detail
- Pier detail (including depth in soil)
- Identify the location of gates and method of operation (i.e.: remote control, manual, keypad)

 Project Cost (see Definitions on page 3):

For a building permit, the required total cost is a market valuation that includes the profit and overhead.

NOTE: If the project cost appears to be unreasonably low, a signed contract between the owner and contractor may be required.

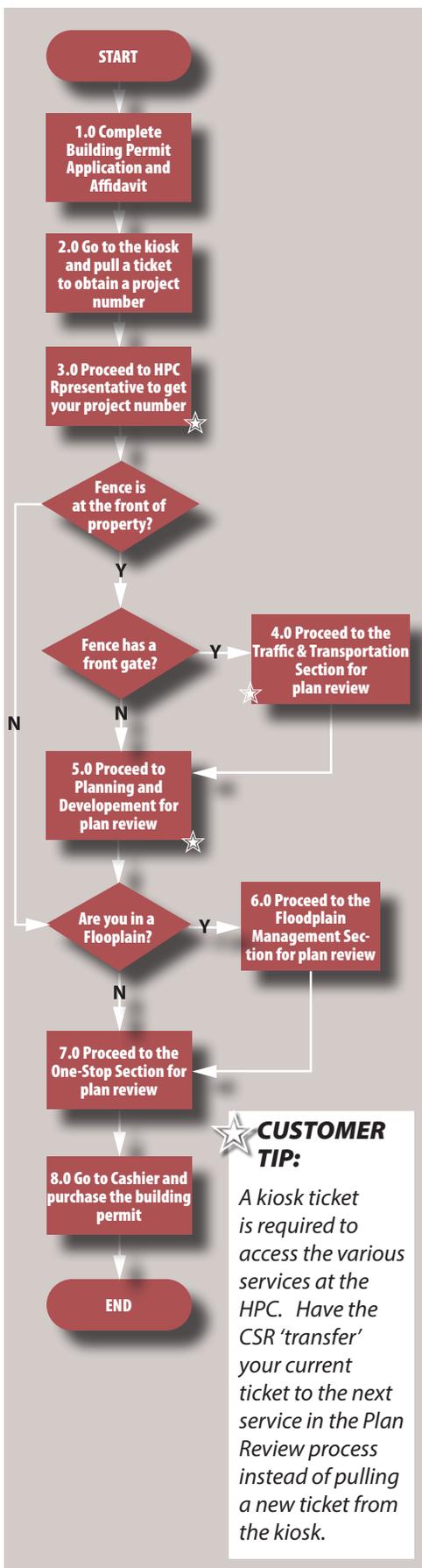
 Floodplain Plan Review Requirements

You must provide the following if your property resides in the 100-year floodplain, floodway or conveyance zone:

- A mitigation plan signed and sealed by a licensed professional engineer
- For projects within the conveyance, a conveyance analysis certified by a professional engineer is required which demonstrates that the proposed improvement will not change the conveyance capacity of the property by more than 0.5% (refer to the Conveyance Zone FAQ on Page 7 for more information)
- For projects within the floodway, a “no adverse impact” letter and supporting documentation prepared by a professional engineer is required

STEPS TO FOLLOW AT THE HPC FOR THE BUILDING PERMIT

- 1.0 Complete the Building Permit Application and the Deed Restriction Affidavit prior to arriving at the HPC. The Deed Restriction Affidavit must be signed by the owner and notarized. There are free notaries available at the HPC. *Please do not sign the Affidavit without a notary present.*
- 2.0 Once at the HPC you must obtain a ticket for a project number from the kiosk station located on the first floor and wait for your number to be called.
- 3.0 HPC Customer Service Representatives (CSR) will call you on a first-come, first-serve basis to setup the project number.
- 4.0 The Traffic & Transportation reviews fences that have a front gate. If your fence does **not** have a front gate proceed to next step.
- 5.0 The Planning and Development Department is responsible for reviewing any fence that is at the front of a property. If your fence is not at the front of the property proceed to next step.
- 6.0 The Floodplain Management Office is responsible for permitting all construction activity within the City of Houston’s Special Flood Hazard Area (100-year floodplain, floodway or conveyance zone). You only need to visit the Floodplain Management Office if your project is located in the 100-year floodplain, floodway or conveyance zone. If this is not the case, please proceed to Step 7.
- 7.0 The One-Stop Plan Review section ensures plans submitted are in compliance with the current construction codes. This section will issue the building permit (which authorizes you to begin construction) after your plans have been approved by all required departments/sections. A sales order will be provided to take to the cashier to purchase the building permit.
- 8.0 All monetary transactions are handled by the cashier on the 1st floor. The cashier will be able to provide your building permit once all fees have been paid.



CUSTOMER TIP:
A kiosk ticket is required to access the various services at the HPC. Have the CSR 'transfer' your current ticket to the next service in the Plan Review process instead of pulling a new ticket from the kiosk.

SECTION	KIOSK PATH
Building Permits	Permits -> Building Construction -> Project Number / Single Trade
Traffic	Plan Review -> Traffic/Right of Way Plan Review -> Yes
Floodplain Management Office	Plan Review -> Flood Management Plan Review -> Flood Management
One-Stop Plan Review	Plan Review -> Building Plan Review -> One Stop Plan Review

Customer Tip:

All required inspections can be scheduled online at www.pdinet.pd.houstontx.gov/cohilms/webs/Inspection_Lookup.asp or by contacting the Building Inspection Line at 713-222-9922.

The owner can only schedule building permit inspections. All other inspections must be scheduled by a licensed contractor.

WHAT INSPECTIONS SHOULD BE EXPECTED?

All required inspections are listed on the building permit job card. The following are some typical inspections that are performed for most fence projects. **These inspections may change depending on each project's scope of work.**

Structural Inspections

- Prior to installing footings/posts
- After fence is installed

Flood Inspections (Only If Project Is In The 100-year Floodplain, Floodway Or Conveyance Zone)

- Pre-Construction
- Final Sitework (upon completion of all work outside of the building)

LINKS TO APPLICATIONS, FORMS AND SAMPLE DRAWINGS

The below documents can be accessed by clicking the hyperlinks or by visiting <http://www.houstonpermittingcenter.org/code-enforcement/publications.html>

Applications and Forms

1. [Building Permit Application](#)
2. [Deed Restriction Affidavit](#)
3. [Project Cost Estimation Worksheet](#) (Flood Requirement Only)

Sample Drawings and Other Useful Information

1. [Conveyance Zone FAQ](#)
2. [Infrastructure Design Manual \(IDM\)](#)
3. [GIMS - How to Check Floodplain Status](#)