

Did you know?

Using battering (modifying the slope), replanting vegetation, and using multiple smaller retaining walls are effective ways to reduce costs and minimise visual impacts.



NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Head to **denmark.wa.gov.au**

- Send us an enquiry
- Lodge your application (planning approval or building permit)
- Find policies and guidelines

Contact our Planning team

- info@denmark.wa.gov.au
- (08) 9848 0300
- 953 South Coast Highway
(9am – 4pm, Mon – Fri)

Current at August 2026



RETAINING WALLS



Do I need planning approval to build a retaining wall?

It depends on more than the height of the wall. Even a retaining wall less than 500mm high may need planning approval.

Approval may be required if the wall is near a boundary or street, does not meet the applicable planning rules, is outside a building envelope, or affects vegetation, a waterway, bushfire requirements or a heritage-protected place.

If a wall is associated with an existing house and meets all relevant requirements, approval may not be needed.

Do I need a building permit to build a retaining wall?

A building permit is required prior to construction for all retaining walls more than 500mm in height.

Retaining walls less than 500mm in height may also require a permit where they:

- Require works that extend beyond the property boundary
- Reduce the bearing capacity of the adjoining lot
- May impact on the structural adequacy of a building or structure on the land, or
- Impact natural drainage in a way that may affect existing or future buildings.

If you are unsure, bring your plans into the Shire for advice from our friendly staff.

What standards apply?

If a property is in the Residential Zone, a retaining wall must be setback from lot boundaries as required by the Residential Design Codes (5.3.7 – Site Works C7.2):

Table 4 – Setback of site works and retaining walls

Height of site works and/or retaining walls	Required minimum setback
0.5m or less	0m
1m	1m
1.5m	1.5m
2m	2m
2.5m	2.5m
3m	3m

On land in all other zones the general lot boundary setbacks will apply.

Multiple retaining walls are assessed cumulatively where these are close together.

Where can I get more advice?

Speak to your builder about your proposed retaining walls and consider whether there is a need to seek further advice from a qualified structural engineer.

Consider the loading of earth and other structures, movement of water, and use (including vehicles).

Who is responsible for a retaining wall?

The landowner who alters the level of the land is responsible for providing a suitable retaining wall or durable embankment. This needs to ensure the natural ground level and any existing surcharge loading at a lot boundary is maintained.

When two adjoining land owners undertake earthworks they are jointly responsible and may need to share the cost of constructing a retaining wall.

