



## Retaining Wall Guidelines

### 2018 Virginia USBC – Exemption from permits

Retaining walls supporting less than three feet of unbalanced fill. This exemption shall not apply to any wall impounding Class I, II or III-A liquids or supporting a surcharge other than ordinary unbalanced fill.

Permits are required for walls not meeting the above exemption per the following table.

<u>Height of unbalanced fill</u>	<u>Permit Required</u>	<u>Design Required</u>
<3 ft	No	No
3 – 4 feet	Yes	No
4 – 6 feet	Yes	Yes*
6 – 10 feet	Yes	Yes
>10 feet	Yes	Yes**

\* Standard manufacturer designs are acceptable for walls up to 6 feet in height with less than 4 feet of ordinary fill. Walls exceeding 6 feet in height or 4 feet of unbalanced fill are required to bear the stamp of a Virginia Registered Design Professional.

\*\* Walls exceeding 10 feet in height or unbalanced fill are required to meet the requirements of the Special Inspections Program.

Walls with no fill or less than 3 feet of unbalanced fill only require a permit when exceeding 6 feet in height.

### Minimum Design Plan Information

- Minimum scale of 1/4 inch = 1 foot; all dimensions must be shown.
- Specifications for the construction materials.
- Specification for the backfill material and compaction requirements.
- Wall elevations and multiple cross-sections of each retaining wall, to include structural details. The actual ground slope at the top and the toe of the retaining wall.
- Bearing capacity of the foundation soil.
- Method of drainage behind the wall.
- Guardrail location and details for retaining wall systems 30 inches and higher, to protect pedestrian traffic when applicable.
- Plans indicating walls which extend across multiple properties must include a description of provisions to be made to provide for access and maintenance of the wall.