



Retaining Structure Building Permit Guide

This guide provides information about building permit requirements for retaining structures within the SCRD.

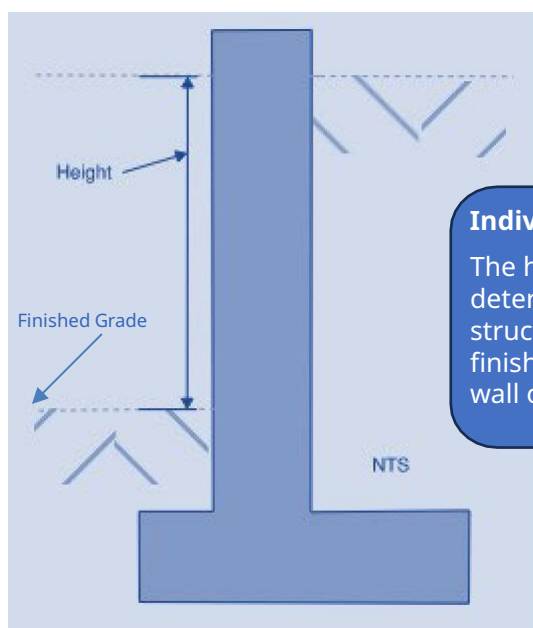
As defined in the Building Bylaw, a retaining structure is *"a nominally vertical wall or structure, or a series of nominally vertical walls or structures with a setback ratio of less than two (2) horizontals to one (1) vertical (2H:1V), constructed for the purpose of reinforcing a slope or supporting terrain"*.

When are Building Permits Required?

Building permits are required to be obtained prior to the construction or repair of all retaining structures greater than 1.2m in height.

A separate building permit is required for each structure. Retaining structures connected to or supporting a building may be included in the building permit issued for the construction of the building, subject to the determination by a Building Official.

How to Determine Height?



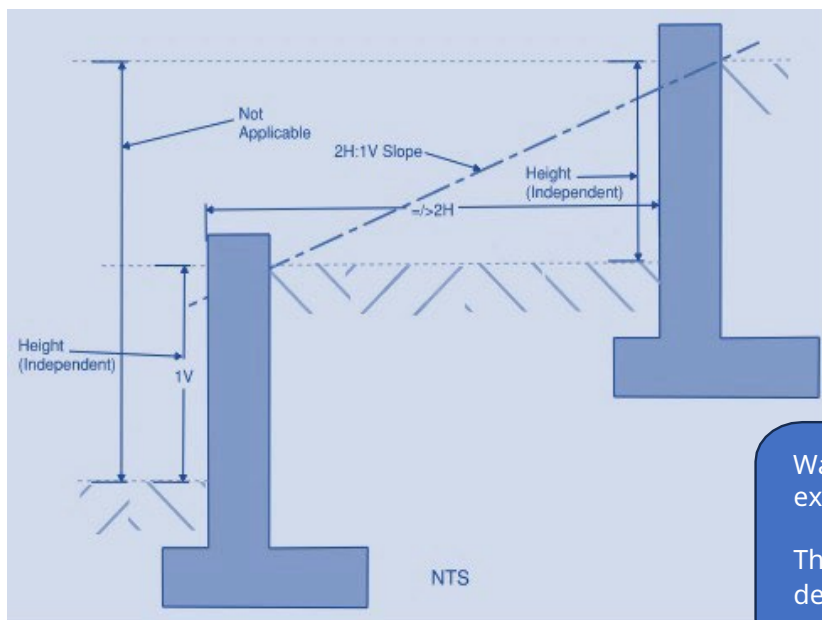
Individual Wall or Structure

The height of an individual retaining structure is determined by measuring, at any point along the structure, the vertical distance between the finished grades at the base and the top of the wall or structure.



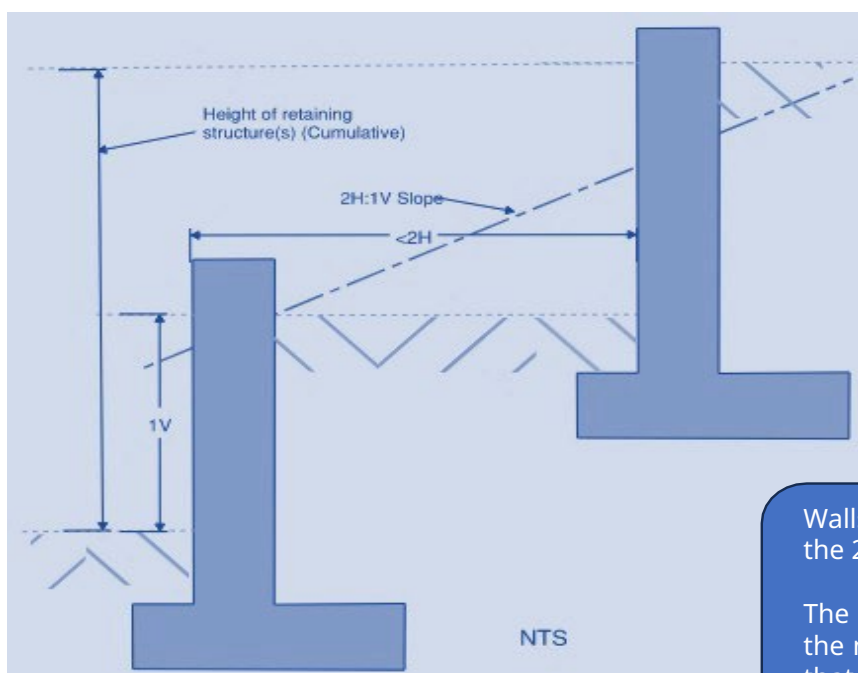
Series of Walls or Structures

When there are a series of walls or structures, the vertical distance is measured between the finished grade at the base of any individual wall or structure and the grade at the top of any adjacent or consecutive wall or structure in that series, that is setback less than 2H:1V.



Walls or structures in series that do not exceed to the slope ratio of 2H:1V.

The height of all walls or structures are determined as individual structures independently.



Walls or structures in series that exceed the 2H:1V slope ratio.

The height is determined as a series to the most consecutive wall or structure that exceeds the slope ratio.



Engineering Requirements

All retaining structures must be designed and constructed to meet the requirements of the Engineers and Geoscientists BC (EGBC) Professional Practice Guidelines - Retaining Wall Design (Guideline) or the BC Building Code (BCBC). The owner must engage the services of a professional engineer as the Engineer of Record (EOR) to undertake the design and construction field review(s) of these structures. The Guideline explains the role of the EOR.

Professional assurances will be required to be provided by an EOR. These include either the Letter of Assurance's; Schedule B at application for design and field review, and Schedule C-B at the completion of the project or the "Retaining Wall Assurance Statements" from Appendix A of the Guideline at building permit application and completion of the project.

Typical Types of Retaining Structures & Requirements

Concrete Retaining Walls

Concrete retaining walls require a building permit along with structural and geotechnical engineer's certification when they are greater than 1.2m in height.

Interlocking Block Retaining Walls

Interlocking block retaining walls require a building permit along with a geotechnical engineer's certification when they are greater than 1.2m in height.

Wood Retaining Walls

All wood retaining walls & cribbing require a building permit along with structural and geotechnical engineer's certification when they are greater than 1.2m in height.

Confirm with the Building Division regarding the requirements for a building permit for any other types of retaining structures.

Zoning and Other Regulatory Considerations

All retaining walls and structures must conform to the siting setbacks and standards as applicable to the specific parcel. SCRD development and/or MOTT setback/encroachment permits may be required despite not being subject to a building permit. Ensure coordination with all regulations before planning the construction of any structure.