

BEFORE YOU LODGE

Retaining walls

Walls, cut and fill on residential lots

Walls that hold back soil, and any cut or fill, change how a lot handles earth and water, so certifiers look closely at engineering and drainage. Use this list when preparing a CDC or a construction certificate application on the NSW Planning Portal, and tick items off as they are ready.

Needed for almost every application

- ☐ Title search, deposited plan and 88B instrument confirming the owner, the lot and any easements or restrictions.
- ☐ Owner's signed consent where someone else is the applicant.
- ☐ Planning certificate (section 10.7) showing the zoning and land hazards council has recorded.
- ☐ Contour survey by a registered surveyor, which certifiers rely on to assess walls and earthworks.
- ☐ Site plan marking each wall, its length and its distance from boundaries and buildings.
- ☐ Sections through the lot showing existing and finished ground levels at each wall.
- ☐ Cost estimate for the walls and earthworks including GST.
- ☐ Long service levy at 0.25% where walls and earthworks together cost \$250,000 or above with GST, settled before approval.

Wall design and earthworks

Exempt height and setback limits for walls and fill vary, so confirm the current figures with your certifier.

- ☐ Engineer's design for each wall, its footings and materials, allowing for any driveway, pool or building above it.
- ☐ Cut and fill plan with depths; earthworks deeper or higher than 600 mm relative to ground level can be complying development.
- ☐ Drainage details behind each wall, showing how water is collected and taken to stormwater.
- ☐ Water flow statement confirming the work will not redirect water or move sediment onto a neighbour's land.
- ☐ Spacing between walls, since exempt walls need 2 m or more of horizontal separation.
- ☐ Distance to any natural waterway, which for an exempt wall has to be 40 m or more.
- ☐ Pier details from the engineer, as supported pier depth no longer counts toward excavation limits.
- ☐ Neighbour footing details where a wall or excavation sits close to the boundary.
- ☐ Erosion and sediment controls on a plan, keeping soil from washing off the site during cut and fill.

Only if it applies to your lot

- ☐ Heritage check: exempt walls are not allowed on a heritage item, and in conservation areas they belong in the back yard.
- ☐ BAL certificate where a CDC is sought on bush fire prone land.
- ☐ Flood control lot details, as earthworks can change how floodwater moves across the land.

- ☐ Sewer and stormwater easements located on site, since walls and fill may need to stay clear.
- ☐ Council approval for trees affected by excavation or new fill.

Council fees, bonds and authority approvals

Amounts and triggers differ from council to council, so check the current figures with your council or certifier.

- ☐ Developer contributions (s 7.11 or s 7.12) if council's contributions plan applies, paid before CDC work begins or as the consent directs.
- ☐ If you hold a DA: the consent, stamped plans and proof each condition due before the CC has been satisfied.
- ☐ Certificate lodgement fee charged by council when the CDC or CC is registered, a small set amount per certificate.
- ☐ Infrastructure security deposit, refunded once council finds no damage to its kerb, gutter, footpath or road, where council requires one.
- ☐ Sydney Water Tap in approval of your plans before work begins, or the local water authority's equivalent, such as Hunter Water.

After approval and before work starts

- ☐ Principal certifier appointed on the Planning Portal by the owner, before any excavation.
- ☐ HBCF certificate for licensed work over \$20,000 before a deposit, or an owner-builder permit above \$10,000.
- ☐ Notice of commencement to council, 2 or more days before machinery arrives.
- ☐ Neighbour notice for a CDC, 7 days before work in metropolitan areas or 2 days in rural and regional areas.
- ☐ Excavation and footing inspections booked with your principal certifier before concrete is placed.

Wall problems are far easier to fix on paper than in the ground. Ask CertifiBuild for a plan assessment once you have a contour survey, and we will check heights, drainage and the approval pathway before engineering is finalised.