

Build a Fence for Privacy

By JOE SZYNKOWSKI | Green Shoot Media

If your backyard is lacking the privacy you desire, a fence might be the perfect investment. These barriers not only keep out unwanted eyes, they are great sources of security and can be valuable additions for families with pets.

Before building a fence, always check with your local officials about any restrictions or special permits you must acquire before construction. Entering into the process without understanding your area's regulations could mean you are forced to tear down your new fence.

While planning the location of your fence, keep in mind the laws regarding distance from property lines, sidewalks and storm drainage. If city employees need to tend to a matter obstructed by your fence, they might destroy portions at your expense.

It is a good idea to obtain a property survey before building your fence. This will ensure you are not intruding on your neighbors' properties, which can save you the headache of relocating it once it's built.

CHOOSE THE PROPER HEIGHT

When building a fence, you will typically choose from pre-assembled panels or separate pickets. Talk to your builder about which type works the best for your property's layout.

Unless your yard is perfectly flat, you will require boards of different heights to enjoy the most privacy.

A great way to deem which areas of your fence should be higher or shorter is to have a friend walk around the yard with different sized sheets of cardboard.



Follow your helper around the yard and make notes where you see the board heights should vary. This method makes it easy to decide exactly how tall your fence should be.

DON'T FORGET ACCESS POINTS

One major mistake people make when building fences is not allowing themselves enough space through the gates. Don't be afraid to stress to your builder that you want access points

wide enough to easily fit items such as lawnmowers and wheelbarrows through.

You also will benefit from a removable panel. When you decide to bring in large loads from a truck or trailer, you'll be glad to have the room to drive into your yard, rather than breaking your back to unload it through a gate.

WHY HIRE A PROFESSIONAL?

While acquiring help to install your

fence might cost more than DIY, a great-looking, long-lasting fence requires immense preparation and flawless execution. A professional fence company may even back up their work with a warranty, in case something goes wrong with the structure. Call your local landscape companies to find out if they offer fence installation services. You might be able to find off-season deals that can save you money.



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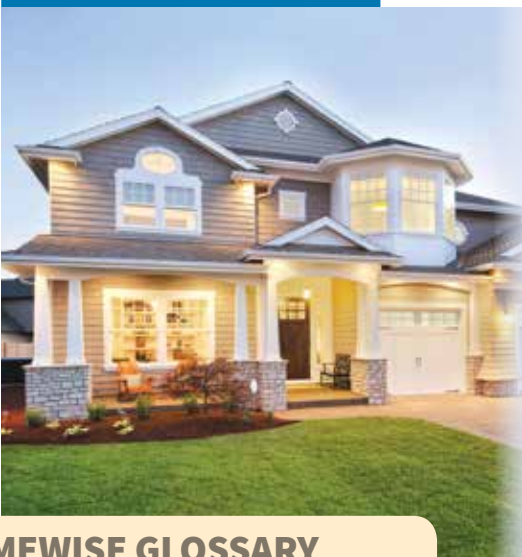
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REAL ESTATE 101



Keep it Legal

In some areas, you need a permit even to replace an existing fence. Permits are intended to ensure that your fence remains inside your property line and doesn't impact any public easements or stormwater drainage. If you skip the permit, you could not only face fines or penalties but future buyers might frown upon it, as well. It's a good idea to not forgo this requirement. Also, don't forget to call your local "call before you dig" hotline to avoid interfering with underground utilities. Call ahead so that workers can mark buried utilities before you or your contractor starts digging.

HOMESWISE GLOSSARY

Interim financing: a short-term or temporary loan such as a construction or bridge loan.

Interim interest: interest owed by the borrower to the lender on the mortgage loan from the day of the closing to the date covered by the first payment.

SOURCE: Columbia University

AD SPACE