

Retaining walls hold back fill or support excavations when the natural ground level has been altered. Retaining walls enable you to enjoy more level space, no matter the gradient of your property.

## Retaining wall specifics

### When is a retaining wall required?

Retaining walls are required on sites when filling or excavation has occurred and:

- soil movement need to be prevented or
- buildings, structures or land in the vicinity need to be protected.

### What construction materials & methods should be considered?

Retaining walls can take the form of boulders, concrete sleepers, timber sleepers or block work. Construction materials should be chosen based on the most appropriate type for the allotment, whilst also considering local government requirements.

All retaining walls must be designed by a suitably qualified person e.g. structural engineer. Some retaining wall systems have manufacturer specifications and installation details which must be followed.

Drainage is an important part of a retaining wall design. Using appropriate construction materials & drainage design so as to not trap surface drainage water behind the wall is essential.

## Building Approval

In Queensland, retaining walls require a Building Approval where\*:

- greater than 1m high or
- closer than 1.5m to a building or another retaining wall or
- there is a surcharge loading.

In NSW, retaining walls require a Building Approval where\*:

- greater than 600mm high or
- closer than 2m from another retaining wall or
- closer than 1m to a lot boundary or
- within 40m from a waterbody or
- within 1m of a registered easement, sewer or water main.

*\*Please note that additional local government planning requirements may apply to your property and affect the type of approval/s required. Professional Certification Group will conduct searches to ensure all necessary planning controls and applicable rules for development are met as part of the approval process.*

### Applying to Professional Certification Group

At Professional Certification Group, we can assess, approve and inspect your retaining wall for you. If you lodge an application with us before we've issued an approval for your dwelling, we can include the wall in your dwelling approval. If we need to certify the retaining walls after we've issued the dwelling approval, then a new approval for the wall will be necessary.

To apply for building approval, please complete a PCG Building Application Form, provide plans including a site plan and include an engineer's certification for the design.

If your retaining wall requires secondary approvals – such as siting relaxations, building over sewer/stormwater permits, tidal/waterway consents – Professional Certification Group will manage these as part of the building approval process.

The approval process generally takes less than one week for straight-forward applications.