

ZONING AND PLANNING

Table 14-701-6: Exceptions to Dimensional Standards⁵⁹³

Exceptions to Height Limits	
Type of District	Permitted Encroachment
All Districts	Balustrades and parapet walls may extend above the height limits up to 42 in.
	Solar collectors and related support structures may extend above the height limits up to 9 ft.; see § 14-604(7) (Solar Collectors).
Residential Districts	Monuments, belfries, cupolas, minarets, pinnacles, gables, spires, chimneys, radio or television antennas, fire walls, or ornamental towers not for human occupancy.
	Towers of mechanical or structural necessity where the cross-section area of the tower at no point exceeds 20% of the gross floor area of the ground floor of the building.
	Vegetated roof structures (e.g. containers and other permanent infrastructure) that do not extend more than 30 in. above the height limit.
	Wind energy conversion systems: see § 14-604(6) (Small Wind Energy Conversion Systems).
	A roof deck and associated railings, fencing, and access structures: see § 14-604(5) (Roof Decks).
Commercial, Industrial, and Special Purpose districts, when attached to principal building	Chimneys.
	Fire escape towers.
	Penthouses or roof structures for the housing of elevators, stairways, tanks, ventilating fans, heating and cooling towers, or similar equipment required to operate and maintain the building.
	Fire walls.
	Radio, wireless, and television aerials.
	Flagpoles.
	Airplane beacons.
	Wind energy conversion systems; see § 14-604(6) (Small Wind Energy Conversion Systems).
Vegetated roofs structures (e.g. containers and other permanent infrastructure) that do not extend more than 5 ft. above the height limit.	

⁵⁹³ Amended, Bill No. 120774-A (approved January 14, 2013); amended, Bill No. 130764 (approved December 18, 2013); amended, Bill No. 161003-A (approved May 8, 2017); amended, Bill No. 190784-A (approved December 30, 2019); amended, Bill No. 210075 (approved March 29, 2021); amended, Bill No. 210078-A (approved April 28, 2021).

THE PHILADELPHIA CODE

Exceptions to Yard, Setback, and Open Area Requirements	
Type of District	Permitted Encroachment
Residential Districts	Fences are permitted in required front yard areas, but any fence located within a required front setback area shall be no more than 4 ft. tall and no more than 50% opaque. Fence posts and gate posts that are included as architectural features are permitted up to 6 ft. in height. This standard shall also apply to any side of a corner lot facing a street.
	Fences are permitted in the required rear yard area and in any portion of the required side yard area behind the front wall of the principal structure, but may not be more than 6 ft. tall. This standard shall also apply to any side of a corner lot that does not face a street.
	Retaining walls are subject to the restrictions on fence heights to the extent that those walls protrude above the actual ground level at the highest point of the wall, but shall not apply to any retaining wall required by the provisions of any section of The Philadelphia Code or related regulations.
	Entranceway covers, canopies, and awnings may project into required front or rear yard areas up to 5 ft., and may project into required side yard areas up to 3 ft.
	Porches may encroach into the required front setback in RSA-5, RSA-6, and RM-1 districts.
	Balustrades, chimneys, cornices, and vents may project into required front, side, or rear yard or setback areas up to 24 in.
	Pilasters may project into required front, side, or rear yard or setback areas up to 18 in.
	Moldings and belt courses may project into required front, side, or rear yard or setback areas up to 12 in.
	Solar energy collectors: see § 14-604(7) (Solar Collectors).
	Wind energy conversion systems; see § 14-604(6) (Small Wind Energy Conversion Systems).
	Geothermal energy equipment, rainwater harvesting barrels, and odorless composting equipment shall be allowed to encroach into required side yards that are at least 5 ft. wide, and into required rear yards, but not within 2 ft. of any side or rear lot line.
Commercial, Industrial, and Special Purpose districts	In all Commercial districts, areas not included in required occupied areas may not be used for permanent storage purposes, but may be used for temporary storage for up to 30 days in each calendar year. Use of areas not included in required occupied areas for storage for more than 30 days in any calendar year shall require approval of the Zoning Board through the special exception procedures of § 14-303(7) (Special Exception Approval).
	Solar energy collectors: see § 14-604(7) (Solar Collectors).
	Wind energy conversion systems; see § 14-604(6) (Small Wind Energy Conversion Systems).
	Geothermal energy equipment, rainwater harvesting barrels, and odorless composting equipment shall be allowed to encroach into required side and rear yard areas in the Commercial, Industrial, and Special Purpose districts, but not within 2 ft. of any side or rear lot line.