



**OFFICE OF THE BUILDING INSPECTION  
INFORMATION REQUIRED TO CONSTRUCT A BERM**

A berm is defined as “a man-made mound of earth often used to shield, screen, or buffer undesirable views and sounds; separate incompatible land uses; or provide visual interest or privacy” in Appendix B (Section 16.01) of Chapter 170 of the Village Code.

**REQUIRED APPLICATION MATERIALS:**

- A completed Village of Richfield Building Permit Application
- A site plan prepared at a scale of 1” = 20” or other appropriate scale
- All necessary building permit fees:
  - \$60.00

**PROJECT REQUIREMENTS:**

- SEE ATTACHED

**BUILDING INSPECTOR INFORMATION:**

Joe Tillmann, Inspector – [inspector@richfieldwi.gov](mailto:inspector@richfieldwi.gov)  
(Office Hours: Tuesday and Wednesday from 7:30AM to 8:45AM and from 12:30PM to 1:15PM)

Greg Darga, Inspector – [inspectorii@richfieldwi.gov](mailto:inspectorii@richfieldwi.gov)  
(Office Hours: Friday from 7:30AM to 8:45AM and from 12:30PM to 1:15PM)

Village of Richfield  
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16.01

Berm

**Description:** A man-made mound of earth often used to shield, screen, or buffer undesirable views and sounds; separate incompatible land uses; or provide visual interest or privacy.

**Vehicle Parking:** On-site parking is not required

**Supplemental Standards:**

**A. Side slope/grade.** The maximum side slope on all sides of a berm must not be steeper than 3:1 (one-foot vertical increase in height over a three-foot horizontal length).

**B. Crown/transition.** A berm must have a less steep and nearly flat top or crown with a minimum width equal to 1/2 the maximum height at that location.

**C. Height.** The maximum height of a berm is 4 feet as measured from the average predeveloped or natural grade elevation to the top or crown of the berm. Berms greater than 4 feet shall not be permitted, unless the berm is expressly approved by the Village as part of another permit or approval (e.g., subdivision plat, certified survey map, site plan, mining permit or conditional use permit for the site).

**D. Shape and uniformity.** Berms shall be sculptured, undulating, and non-uniform in height, width, side-slope, and appearance.

**E. Setbacks.** Berms shall not be installed in any public right-of-way, in any vision triangles, or in any location that would further reduce or impair sight distances at any driveway/public road intersections. The nearest point of a berm shall be setback from all property lines and road rights-of-way a minimum distance of 2 feet for every one foot of the total berm height at that location, or, as may otherwise be required to meet other standards or limitations in this chapter.

**F. Utility easements.** A berm shall not be installed over utility easements that would hamper or preclude access to such easements nor be installed under overhead utility lines that would reduce the vertical clearance below that deemed acceptable by the utility company or operator.

**G. Material.** Berms must be composed and/or constructed of earth. Berms shall not contain non earth fill materials such as concrete, asphalt, wood, garbage, metal, etc. A minimum of four inches of topsoil must be provided.

**H. Drainage and erosion control.** Berms shall not be installed in a manner that diverts, delays, increases, holds back, or otherwise impairs the control of erosion and the overland flow of stormwater run-off from that which is intended, planned, or needed to control water run-off safely and efficiently. Best management practices must be used during the period of construction and installation of a berm. Culverts or tiles may be required and/or installed through a berm (at right angles to the berm axis) consistent with standards set forth in the Village's stormwater and erosion control ordinance, chapter 167.

**I. Vegetation.** At a minimum, berms should be planted with a low maintenance ground cover consisting of native grasses and/or a prairie grass/flower mix (Note: taller grasses and flowers can provide a higher, natural screening that may allow a lower berm height). A combination of deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs should be planted along the base and slightly up into a berm in nonuniform groupings or clusters and not along the top or crown in a continuous, uninterrupted, and uniform pattern. The placement of large, deciduous trees is discouraged in those areas of a berm that are comprised exclusively of fill material given the potential for wind resistance and toppling. Deciduous trees should be planted near or along the base of a berm and not within the side slopes beyond a vertical point that is more than one-third of the total berm height. Smaller, evergreen trees and shrubs having less wind resistance and chance for toppling



should be planted along or near the base of a berm and not within the side slopes beyond a vertical point that is more than two-thirds of the total berm height.

**J. Fences.** Fences shall not be installed at the top or crown of a berm. Subject to any other fencing requirements and limitations, solid, privacy-type fencing should not be installed within fill areas or side slopes of a berm. Low, split-rail, or other open and decorative fencing may be installed along or near the base of a berm.

**K. Time.** A berm must be built and fully graded, seeded and/or landscaped in compliance with the specifications approved in the berm permit within one calendar year after the permit is issued.