

## FAQ:

# How are enclosures and barriers around sports facilities reviewed under the zoning code?

### Background:

The Philadelphia Zoning Code regulates the height and area of buildings and fencing but it does not specifically regulate enclosures or barriers customarily associated with athletic facilities, except for enclosures around courts or fields in SP-PO and SP-INS. Although some enclosures or barriers may be constructed of chain link or netting, based on its function and necessity for the safety of spectators, players, and the general public, it does not function as fencing.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Enclosures around courts or fields,
- Baseball backstops, and
- Batting Cages

### Answer:

For athletic facilities associated with schools, recreation centers and fitness or sports clubs, the department recognizes the following guidelines:

- Baseball backstops: 30 feet
- Batting cages: 15 feet
- Enclosures around all courts or fields: 15 feet

Within the Parks and Open Space (Special Purpose) District (SP-PO) enclosures around all courts or fields are reviewed as fences and regulated by 14-407(4).

Within the Institutional (Special Purpose) District (SP-INS) enclosures around all courts or fields are reviewed as fences and regulated by 14-404(8).

In all other districts and for other types of structures within SP-PO and SP-INS, these are structures undefined by the Zoning Code, and will be reviewed according to [Code Bulletin Z-2301](#).

If a proposed enclosure is not mentioned above or exceeds the parameters listed above, it may still be permissible if the applicant can demonstrate how it is integral to the facility. If you have any questions about a specific proposal, you are encouraged to [contact the Department](#) directly prior to erecting the enclosure.

### Additional Notes:

In addition to enclosures customarily associated with athletic facilities, other athletic structures that are not specifically mentioned in the Zoning Code (e.g., football goal posts and basketball hoops) may be exempt from requiring a zoning permit under certain conditions. See [Code Bulletin Z-2301](#) for more information.

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### Questions?

Call 311 or (215) 686-8686 (if outside Philadelphia) or submit an online form via <http://www.phila.gov/li/get-help>.

### Disclaimer:

This interpretation, policy or code application is intended to provide guidance to staff for consistency of review and is subject to change without notice. Application of this interpretation, policy or code application to specific projects may vary. There may be other ways to comply with the Code. If so, you are not required to use this method. You may want to investigate other options or consult with a professional identifying an equally code compliant solution.