



# Municipality of Anchorage

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## Policy Z.02

### Use of Fill to Increase Building Height

As a result of recent changes to the permitted heights of buildings within certain residential districts, and the practice of some to utilize fill materials to obtain a greater building height than would ordinarily be permitted, this policy memorandum has been issued for clarification of building height within the Municipality of Anchorage.

The reference datum for determination of building height shall be selected by either section AMC21.45.050.A.1 or A.2, whichever yields a greater height of building. For the purpose of determining building height, in no case shall the owner, builder, contractor, or agent of the owner utilize any other datum other than the existing grade of a lot or tract prior to construction as the grade for a proposed building.

In case of a lot filled prior to issuance of a building permit, the owner or his agent shall obtain a separate fill permit that addresses the gross area of the lot or tract and impacts to neighboring areas. In no case may the owner, builder, contractor, or agent of the owner alter the existing grade to obtain a higher structure than is otherwise permitted in the zoning district.

Should special circumstances prevail in which a building would exceed the maximum height permitted in a zoning district, the owner may apply for a variance through the Zoning Board of Examiners and Appeals. In no instance shall a permit, or in the case of a structure built over height, a Certificate of Occupancy be issued until a ruling has been made, and a copy of the resolution is presented to Building Safety.

The definitions from Title 21 of the Anchorage Municipal Code have been consolidated here for your convenience. These terms apply when determining the height of any structure.

#### **AMC 21.35.020:**

Building height means the vertical distance above a reference datum measured to the highest portion of the coping of a flat roof or to the deck line of a mansard roof, or to the average height of the highest gable of a pitched or hipped roof as illustrated in figures 1 and 2 and Section 21.45.050.

Grade (adjacent ground level) means the lowest point of elevation of the finished surface of the ground, paving, or sidewalk within the area between the building and the property line, or, when the property line is more than five feet from the building, between the building and a line five feet from the building.

Gross area means the total site area, excluding bodies of water, to be included within a proposed development as indicated on the site plan.

Lot means a parcel of land shown as an individual unit on the most recent plat of record.

Story means that portion of a building between any floor and the next floor above, except that the topmost story shall be that portion of a building between the topmost floor and the ceiling or roof above it. If the finished floor directly above a basement, cellar, or unused floor space is more than six feet above grade for more than 50 percent of the total perimeter or is more than 12 feet above the grade at any point, such basement, cellar or unused floor space shall be considered a story.

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Ron Thompson, Building Official

DATE: April 17, 2006

(Ref. 99-04; 02-01;05-02; 02-06)