



# Codes and Ordinances Governing Your City

## Building Heights

### How Tall Can a Home Be?

The maximum main building height in a residential zone shall be 35 feet. Building height shall be the vertical height, as measured from the average elevation of the natural grade of the 4 major corners where the structure is to be located, to the roofline. For a home that steps down a slope, the 4 major corners of each step of the main structure can be used. If the measurements used for building height are questioned by city staff, the planning commission will review and make a determination.

### All Roofs Are Not the Same!

To measure to the roofline, you have to know what type of roof you have. We define three types; Flat, Mansard, and Gable. Here is how you measure to them:

**Flat Roof** = measure to the highest point of a flat roof or top of any adjacent parapet wall, whichever is higher.

**Mansard Roof** = measure to the deck line.

**Gable, Hip, or Gambrel Roof** = measure to the elevation measured at the midpoint between the highest part of the roof ridgeline and the lowest elevation of the eaves of the main roof structure (not including independent, incidental roof structures over porches, garages and similar add on portions of the structure).

### Building with the Natural Terrain

If you're building in Elk Ridge, you are most likely building on a hillside. To the maximum extent feasible, buildings shall be sited in locations that are sympathetic to existing contours rather than those that require a building solution that would dominate the site. Buildings shall be designed to follow natural contours rather than modifying the land to accept a building design not tailored to the site. Cuts and fills shall be kept to a minimum and be used to allow for proper drainage away from dwellings and neighboring properties.

### What is the Best Way to Design My Home on a Hillside?

Single-family residences constructed on hillsides should step down the hillside rather than re-grading the hillside into a flat site. A simple box form will stand out from the natural, complex undulations of hillsides more than a building form that is broken into smaller elements. A building can be broken up by raising and lowering the roofline, varying the face of the building, adding balconies and overhangs, etc. These elements create shadow patterns that are similar to shadows cast by rocks, trees and cliffs on hillsides and tend to lessen the apparent size of the building.

### What about Chimneys, Flagpoles, or Antennas?

Chimneys, flagpoles, television antennas, satellite dishes, and similar ancillary structures not used for human occupancy shall be excluded in determining height provided that no such structure shall extend over 15 feet above the building.

### So what are All the Rules?

You can view the complete city code at the city office or go to the city website at [www.elkridgecity.org](http://www.elkridgecity.org) look under Quick Links and Entire City Code:

City Code 10-12-39 Residential Building Heights