

Sight Distance Obstructions on Corner Lots

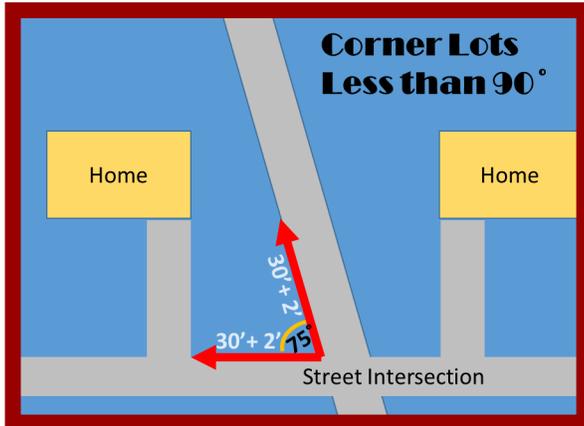
Do you know about Fairfax County's Zoning Regulations for Sight Obstructions on Corner Lots?

Motorists approaching an intersection should have a clear and unobstructed view of approaching traffic in order to see, react, and take appropriate action. The minimum area to provide this view of approaching traffic is called the "sight triangle".

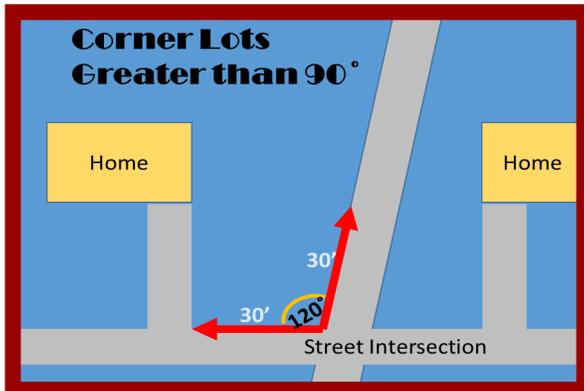
Section 2-505 of the Zoning Ordinance limits uses on corner lots in order to establish adequate sight distance; however, there is no zoning regulation for sight obstructions on other types of lots.

Establishing the Line of Sight

A plat of your lot can be helpful in this effort. The line of sight is established by creating points on the street lines along a lot and connecting those points to create the sight triangle. The red dashed line in the diagram is the line of sight. To determine where to create the points along the street line:



- ◆ For a lot with a narrow corner of less than ninety (90) degrees, a point shall be made on each street line thirty (30) feet from the corner tip, plus one (1) foot for every ten (10) degrees less than ninety degrees. The degree of angle should be rounded up to the nearest ten. For example, 75 degrees would be rounded up to 80 degrees and the point would be set at 31 feet; but 74 degrees would rounded down to 70 degrees and the point would be set at 32 feet.



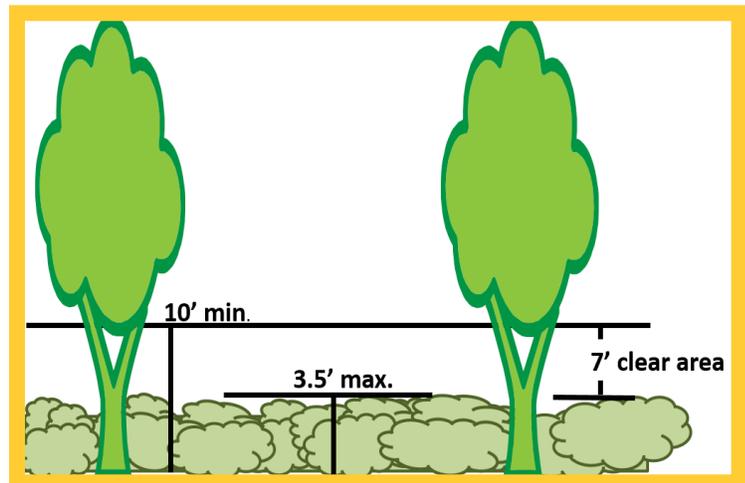
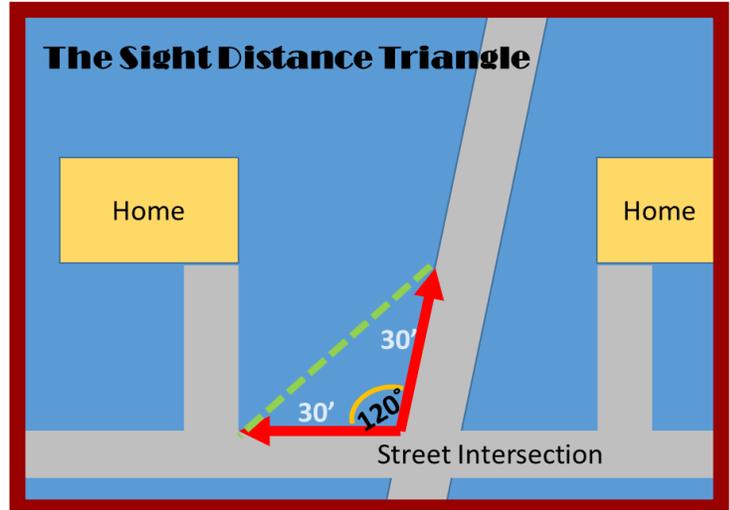
- ◆ For a lot with a broad corner of ninety (90) degrees or more, a point shall be made on each street line thirty (30) feet from the corner tip.

Turn Over



Determining if a Sight Obstruction Exists

- ◆ The area within the sight triangle is the part of a corner lot regulated by the Zoning Ordinance in order to minimize sight obstructions at intersections and preserve an unobstructed line of sight.
- ◆ In this sight triangle, there shall be no structure or planting of such nature and dimension as to obstruct sight distance other than a post, column or trunk of tree (but not branches or foliage), which is not greater than one (1) foot in cross section or diameter.
- ◆ Such sight distance shall be maintained between two (2) horizontal planes, one of which is three and one-half (3 1/2) feet, and the other which is ten (10) feet above the grade.
- ◆ This creates a seven (7) foot clear area for a line of sight that is above the three and one-half (3 1/2) foot plane and below the ten (10) foot plane.



Bringing a Property into Compliance

To comply with sight distance regulations, you may have to:

- ◆ Remove, relocate and/or lower a fence or other structure that is located in the sight triangle;
- ◆ Remove bushes, trees, or limbs of a tree that are lower than ten (10) feet from grade; and/or,
- ◆ Prune bushes so that they are no taller than three feet in height and/or not located in the sight triangle.

To report a possible violation:



Fairfax County Department of Code Compliance
12055 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA 22035
Phone: 703-324-1300, TTY 711
Web: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/code



To request this information in an alternate format, call the Department of Code Compliance.

This Fairfax County, VA Publication (published August 2016) summarizes a few regulations. See relevant codes for specific requirements.