

CARTHAGE FIRE DEPARTMENT INFORMATION BULLETIN

SUBJECT: FIRE APPARATUS ACCESS ROADS AND EMERGENCY VEHICLE ACCESS

NOTE: This information bulletin is a summary of Fire Department interpretations of International Fire Code (IFC), 2003 Edition. The information contained herein applies to typical instances and may not address all individual circumstances. This information bulletin is being provided in order to establish clear policy with respect to Fire Code requirements for primary Fire Department access roads.

1. **WHERE REQUIRED:**

Fire apparatus access roads shall be provided to within 150 feet of all exterior portions of the first story of every building, as measured by an approved route around the exterior of the building (IFC 503.1.1).

2. **WIDTH:**

Fire apparatus roads shall be provided as follows (IFC 503):

Unless otherwise specified, roads shall be a minimum of 20 feet in width. A minimum width of twenty four (24) feet is preferred.

Roads serving buildings two (2) stories in height must be a minimum of twenty four (24) feet in width. This road width provides the required access needed to accommodate operating fire apparatus and room for emergency exiting of private vehicles.

Roads serving buildings three (3) or more stories, or in excess of thirty five (35) feet in height must be a minimum of 28 feet in width. This road width provides the required access needed to accommodate aerial apparatus required for structures of this height and room for emergency exiting of private vehicles.

3. **GATES:**

Gates proposed on Fire Department Access Roads shall be reviewed and approved by the Fire Marshal prior to a permit being issued. Approved gates shall comply with the Fire Code (IFC 503.5 & 503.5.1)

4. **SECONDARY ACCESS:**

A secondary means of emergency vehicle access is required when the road serves in excess of 50 residential units, or exceeds 500 feet in length or when, in the opinion of the Fire Marshal, access by a single road might be impaired or unsafe due to vehicle congestion, condition of terrain, climatic conditions, very high fire hazard severity zones or other such local conditions (IFC 503.1.1)

5. **VERTICAL CLEARANCE:**

Minimum unobstructed vertical clearance of all Fire Department Access Roads shall be a minimum of 13 feet 6 inches (IFC 503.2.1).

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6. SURFACE:

Fire Department Access Roads shall be designed to support the imposed loads of fire apparatus and shall be surfaced so as to provide all-weather driving capabilities. (IFC 503.2.3)

7. DEAD-END STREETS:

Dead-end streets exceeding 150 feet in length shall be provided with an approved area for turning around fire apparatus. (IFC 503.2.5)

8. TURNING RADIUS:

The required turning radius of a Fire Department Access Road shall be determined by the fire code official (Fire Marshal). (IFC 503.2.4)

9. GRADE:

The maximum grade of a Fire Department Access Road shall not exceed 10 percent or a 10-foot rise in a 100-foot length. (IFC 503.2.7)

10. TURNAROUNDS:

Fire department access road turnarounds shall meet Fire Department standards. Approved turnarounds shall conform to Appendix D of the International Fire Code, 2003 addition.

11. OBSTRUCTIONS:

The required width of any fire apparatus access road shall not be obstructed in any manner; including but not limited to, parking of vehicles, placement of dumpsters, stacking of building materials or other items. Where required, approved signs or other notices prohibiting parking or obstructions shall be provide and maintained by the property owner. (IFC 503.3 & 503.4)

12. BRIDGES:

Bridges shall be constructed and maintained in accordance with nationally recognized standards. Bridges shall be designed for a live load sufficient to carry the imposed loads of fire apparatus. (IFC 503.2.6)

FOR QUESTIONS CONCERNING FIRE ACCESS ROADS, PLEASE CONTACT:

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