



RESIDENTIAL DRIVEWAY ACCESS PERMITS

Driveway Access Permit Requirement

Driveway access permits are required by Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS 374) and Deschutes County Code (DCC 12.28.050) whenever a driveway connects a public road under Deschutes County jurisdiction to private property. These permits help ensure:

Safety for Roadway and Driveway Users:

- Adequate intersection and stopping sight distance.
- Appropriate spacing between intersections and other driveways.
- Acceptable vehicle turning angles.
- No interference with roadway signs, guardrails, or other safety devices.

Compliance with State and Federal Laws:

- Prevention of interference with roadway drainage facilities.
- Avoidance of impacts to known wetlands, waterways, or protected areas.
- Compliance with applicable land use regulations.

Application Review Process

Submission:

Applications are submitted to the Deschutes County Community Development Department (CDD).

Initial Review:

CDD staff reviews the application for completeness and compliance with land use and environmental requirements.

Road Department Review:

The Deschutes County Road Department reviews applications in the order they are received and conducts site inspections to verify:

- Adequate sight distance, spacing, and approach angle requirements.
- No interference with safety devices or drainage facilities.
- Adherence to Deschutes County construction requirements provided in the permit.

Records Filing:

Permit records are kept with the property's land use and permit record at the CDD.

Sight Distance Requirements

Sight distance is the length of road a driver needs to see clearly to avoid a collision with an object or other road user. Driveway approaches in Deschutes County must comply with two different sight distance measurements: intersection sight distance and stopping sight distance.

Intersection Sight Distance

- The minimum clear line of sight between a driver entering a highway and approaching vehicles from both directions.
- Intended to allow a driver to enter the road safely while allowing traffic on the road to maintain normal travel speed.
- Measured from a driver's eye height (3.5 feet), seated 15 feet back from the fog line or edge of the roadway, to an object on the highway that is 3.5 feet high.

Stopping Sight Distance

- The distance required for a driver to detect a stationary object in their path, recognize the need to stop, and bring their vehicle to a safe, controlled stop before a collision occurs.
- Intended to allow a driver to exit the road safely while allowing other road users sufficient time to react and execute a stop if necessary.
- Measured from a driver's eye height (3.5 feet) to the approximate height of an average vehicle bumper (2.0 feet) in the driver's lane.

Driveway Approach Spacing

While there is no specific access spacing standard for residential driveways, driveways must be located along a parcel's frontage to maximize spacing from other driveways and intersecting roads.

No driveway shall be permitted within 50 feet of a road apron, measured from the outermost edges of the approaches along the roadway's edge being accessed.

Existing Driveway Accesses

Driveway access permits have been required by Oregon law since 1955. However, many unpermitted driveways were built afterward, causing property owners to unknowingly inherit unpermitted access points.

Only driveways in place prior to 1955 in continuous use can be considered "grandfathered", any driveway installed after this date without a permit is considered an unpermitted approach and has no presumption of written permission.

Unpermitted driveways pose liability risks to property owners and potential safety hazards. All property owners accessing a public road under Deschutes County jurisdiction are encouraged to obtain a driveway access permit, however a driveway access permit *must* be obtained before the issuance of building permits for new dwellings, replacement dwellings, or accessory structures.

Secondary Driveways

Secondary driveway access is permitted if:

- The property has **50 feet or more of frontage** on a road.
- The secondary driveway meets all other applicable requirements in the Deschutes County Code.

No more than two driveway approaches are allowed for any parcel in Deschutes County.

Permit Rights Granted

A driveway access permit only grants permission to cross the county right-of-way line at a specified location. It **does not** grant permission to access or cross adjacent private property.