



Highway Department

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Approved Transportation Committee – 3-17-2025

St. Croix County Connection/Driveway Policy

Authority and Applicability

This policy governs driveway access to St. Croix County highways under the authority of **Wisconsin Statute §86.07** and **Wisconsin Administrative Code Trans 231**.

A **written permit** is required for any of the following within county jurisdiction:

- Excavation
- Connection or driveway installation
- Culvert placement
- Right-of-way alteration

Permits are issued by the **St. Croix County Highway Department**.

A **County highway connection** includes driveways, public or private roads, streets, or recreational trails connecting properties adjacent to a county highway right-of-way.

Purpose

The driveway permit policy aims to:

- Enhance traffic safety through improved driveway design and placement.
- Minimize conflicts between access points and roadway operations.
- Promote safe and efficient traffic flow.
- Ensure compliance with access management standards.

When a Permit is Required

A **connection permit** is required for any property owner seeking to:

- Construct a new connection.
- Remove an existing connection.
- Relocate an existing connection.
- Alter an existing connection, including a **change of use**.

Definitions:

- **Alteration:** Any modification beyond routine maintenance, such as widening, paving, culvert replacement, or highway-related improvements.
- **Change of Use:** A modification that alters the number and/or types of vehicles using the connection. Examples include:
 - Transitioning from residential to commercial/industrial use.
 - Changing from single to multiple residential units.
 - Subdividing to create additional residences or businesses.
 - Changing the type of business.

Guidelines for Driveway Approval

1. Stopping Sight Distance

- Driveways on roads with a **55-mph speed limit** must have a **minimum stopping sight distance of 500 feet**.
- Permits may be denied if alternate access is available, but sight distance is insufficient.

2. Proximity to Intersections

- Driveways on corner lots must access the **lower functionally classified highway** whenever possible.
- Setback requirements:
 - **500 feet** from an intersecting **collector-classified highway**.
 - **200 feet** from an intersecting **local-classified highway** (unless terrain or environmental constraints prevent compliance).

3. Driveway Spacing

- Minimum spacing requirements:
 - **Arterial/Collector Roads:** 500 feet
 - **Local Roads:** 200 feet
 - Reference **WisDOT Functional Classification map** for St. Croix County.

4. Nonproliferation of Driveways

- **Subdivided parcels** may not be guaranteed individual access points.
- **Rear/local access roads** may be required for multiple lots along a highway frontage.
- **Maximum driveways per lot:**
 - **Commercial/Industrial:** 2 accesses max.
 - **Residential:** 1 access (A second may be permitted if the additional access serves an otherwise inaccessible part of the parcel).

5. Traffic Considerations

- Driveway approvals consider **current and projected traffic volumes** to avoid future access restrictions.

- A **Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA)** may be required at the applicant's expense.

6. Access Requirements

- The applicant must have **direct access to a public highway** or a **permanent easement** providing access to a public highway.
- Permits are only issued to **property owners**.

Driveway Design Standards

- **Residential Driveways:** Max width **24 feet**.
- **Commercial/Industrial/Agricultural Driveways:** Max width **35 feet**.
- **Grade Restrictions:**
 - Max **2%** grade within the public right-of-way or **50 feet** from the highway centerline, whichever is less.
- **Side Slope Restrictions:** Maximum **4:1 slope** within the right-of-way.
- **Culverts:**
 - Minimum **18-inch diameter** (subject to site conditions and Highway Department approval).
 - Larger culverts may be required for drainage considerations.
- **Concrete Driveways:** Not permitted within **10 feet** of the pavement edge on county roads.
- **Headwalls/Retaining Walls:**
 - Must be **outside the public right-of-way**.
 - Improperly placed headwalls may be removed at the property owner's expense.

Maintenance Responsibilities

Property owners must maintain driveway connections within the **County highway right-of-way**, including but not limited to:

- Snow removal
- Asphalt sealing
- Gravel reshaping and grading
- Culvert cleaning and minor repairs

A permit is **not** required for routine maintenance but is **required** for:

- Connection regrading
- Culvert replacement
- Any work affecting traffic flow or ground disturbance within the right-of-way.

Permit Fees

Fees cover administrative costs and are subject to periodic updates.

Access Type	Fee
Agricultural Field Access	\$25
Residential & Commercial-Rural Access	\$50
Commercial Driveway & Subdivision Road Access	\$75

Unauthorized driveways installed without a permit may result in removal or additional charges.

Appeal Process

- If a permit is denied, the applicant may **appeal to the Highway Commissioner**.
- Further appeals may be made to the **St. Croix County Transportation Committee** (Resolution #83(2011)).