

Town of Wallingford Driveway Access Policy

Vermont Statutes Annotated Title 19, Section 1111

“It shall be unlawful to develop, construct, regrade, or resurface any driveway, entrance, or approach, or build a fence or building, or deposit material of any kind within, or to in any way affect the grade of a highway right-of-way, or obstruct a ditch, culvert, or drainage course that drains a highway, or fill or grade the land adjacent to a highway so as to divert the flow of water onto the highway right-of-way, without a written permit from the agency, in the case of state highways, or the legislative body, or designee of a municipality, in the case of town highways.”

Statement of Purpose: This policy establishes minimum standards for the design, construction and maintenance of permanent driveways in order to reduce damage, mitigate erosion, reduce maintenance costs, save money and time, and ensure equal treatment of applicants.

Process: Requests for a driveway permit shall go to the Road Commissioner, who will inspect the site within 21 days of receipt of the application and specify the conditions that need to be met.

Driveway access installation is limited to the non-plowing season. Exceptions may be allowed on a case-by-case basis.

After a permit is obtained, construction shall be completed within one year, or the property owner shall reapply.

Grade of approach: Gentle driveway approaches to the road improve safety and help to prevent water damage. All driveways and access roads shall be constructed so as not to impair drainage within the right-of-way, alter the stability of the improved area, or change the drainage of adjacent areas. The maximum gradient of driveways and side roads should not exceed 10%. Steeper grades may be allowed but with more stringent erosion control, sight distance and other requirements. Entrances should be constructed with no more than 3% grade away from the road for a distance of at least 20 feet.

Angle of approach: Driveways should intersect the road at a preferred angle of 90 degrees but no less than 60 degrees. The road commissioner shall make the final decision on the applicable angle of a driveway entry onto a Town Highway(s).

Sight distance: a vehicle operator preparing to exit the access point should be able to see without obstruction a minimum of 150 feet in either direction. This may require clearing of trees on road frontage by the property owner. No access shall be constructed closer than 275 feet to a sharp curve, hill or other blind area.

Distance between driveways and intersections: Driveways and access roads should be constructed no closer than 20 feet from a property line and no closer than 100 feet from another intersecting street or driveway. The Town may designate greater distances in certain cases.

Width: recommended width for a residential driveway should be between 25 and 35 feet. Roads likely to handle future increased traffic may need to have greater width.

Culverts: A minimum 15” heavy duty HP culvert pipe shall be installed under driveways and access roads as specified by the Road Commissioner. Larger sizes may be required by the Town. Minimum length to be 30 feet.

An engineering analysis at the property owner’s expense may be required by the state or the town if the project impacts state waterways or if there is a history of excessive flooding or drainage. The analysis would be used to determine the appropriate culvert size for a specific location.

Culverts should be placed as far away from the road as practical to maintain good drainage.

In addition, the road foreman may require more conditions as required by any particular site, including:

- Headwalls and tail walls
- Stone-lined ditches with vegetation to prevent erosion.
- Driveway base material
- Driveway ditches designed to keep water off the public road
- Driveway bank stabilization
- Vehicles able to enter public road in a forward direction

Installation, repair and maintenance of culverts:

Initial installation of a driveway culvert shall be done by the owner, at the owner’s expense, in accordance with driveway permit conditions as required by the Road Commissioner. If damage to a town highway is caused by improper installation or grading, it is the responsibility of the property owner to make necessary repairs at his/her expense. Once installed, the Road Commissioner shall inspect and accept in writing the culvert. The culvert will then become the responsibility of the town.

Ditches: No access will be permitted which will result in drainage washing directly onto a town highway. The landowner should daylight driveway ditches onto their own property if possible before intersecting with the town Right-of-Way. Ditches should be at the proper depth when the culvert is installed.

Relation to zoning: A driveway access permit shall be required in order to obtain a zoning permit.

A temporary driveway (in place for six months or less), such as those used for construction, farm and/or logging operations, may be installed upon written approval of the road commissioner.

Amended and Adopted by the Wallingford Selectboard on August 3, 2020