

# 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), 2009 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 and maintained in accordance with Sections 503.1.1 through 503.1.3 (IFC 503.1).

### **2. BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES:**

Approved fire apparatus access roads shall be provided for every facility, building, or portion of a building hereafter constructed or moved into or within the jurisdiction. The fire apparatus access road shall comply with the requirements of this section and shall extend to within 150 feet of all portions of the facility and all portions of the exterior walls of the first story of the building as measured by an approved route around the exterior of the building or facility (IFC 503.1.1).

**EXCEPTION:** The fire code official is authorized to increase the dimension of 150 feet where:

1. The building is equipped throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1, 903.3.1.2 or 903.3.1.3.
2. Fire apparatus access roads cannot be installed because of location on property, topography, water-ways, nonnegotiable grades or other similar conditions, and an approved alternative means of fire protection is provided.
3. There are not more than two Group R-3 or Group U occupancies.

### **3. ADDITIONAL ACCESS:**

The fire code official is authorized to require more than one fire apparatus access road based on the potential for impairment of a single road by vehicle congestion, condition of terrain, climatic conditions or other factors that could limit access (IFC 503.1.2).

### **4. SPECIFICATIONS:**

Fire apparatus access roads shall be installed and arranged in accordance with Sections 503.2.1 through 503.2.8 (IFC 503.2).

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**5. DIMENSIONS:**

Fire apparatus access roads shall have an unobstructed width of not less than 20 feet, exclusive of shoulders, except for approved security gates in accordance with Section 503.6, and an unobstructed vertical clearance of not less than 13 feet 6 inches (IFC 503.2.1).

**6. AUTHORITY:**

The fire code official shall have the authority to require an increase in the minimum access widths where they are inadequate for fire or rescue operations (IFC 503.2.2).

**7. SURFACE:**

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

**8. TURNING RADIUS:**

The required turning radius of a fire apparatus access road shall be determined by the fire code official (IFC 503.2.4).

**9. DEAD ENDS:**

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

**10. GRADE:**

The grade of the fire apparatus access road shall be within the limits established by the fire code official based on the fire department's apparatus (IFC 503.2.7).

**11. ANGLES OF APPROACH AND DEPARTURE:**

The angles of approach and departure for fire apparatus access roads shall be within the limits established by the fire code official based on the fire department's apparatus (IFC 503.2.8).

**12. MARKING:**

Where required by the fire code official, approved signs or other approved notices or markings that include the words NO PARKING – FIRE LANE shall be provided for fire apparatus access roads to identify such roads or prohibit the obstruction thereof. The means by which fire lanes are designed shall be maintained in a clean and legible condition at all times and shall be replaced or repaired when necessary to provide adequate visibility (IFC 503.3).

**13. OBSTRUCTION OF FIRE APPARATUS ACCESS ROADS:**

Fire apparatus access roads shall not be obstructed in any manner, including the parking of vehicles. The minimum widths and clearances established in Section 503.2.1 shall be maintained at all times (IFC 503.4).

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**14. SECURITY GATES:**

The installation of security gates across a fire apparatus access road shall be approved by the fire chief. Where security gates are installed, they shall have an approved means of emergency operation. The security gates and the emergency operation shall be maintained operational at all times. Electric gate operators, where provided, shall be listed in accordance with UL 325. Gates intended for automatic operation shall be designed, constructed and installed to comply with the requirements of ASTM F 2200 (IFC 503.6).

**FOR QUESTIONS CONCERNING FIRE ACCESS ROADS, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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