



Rural Residential Approaches

E-3

Public Works Department – Division of Engineering and Roads

(Note: In this brochure “approach” is defined as access to a county road.)

Where is the approach located?

It is located between the actual physical existing road, gravel or asphalt, and your property line.

Is there more than one type of approach?

There are two types of approaches; urban which includes curb and rural which has no curb.

Why do I need a permit for a rural approach?

A permit is required for a rural driveway so that the county may inspect your approach for sight distance, grade and drainage.

How close to my property line may I have the driveway?

No driveway shall be located any closer than seven and one-half feet from any property line.

What is required for sight distance?

Sight distance at the point of ingress (entry) and egress (exit) should be 10 times the posted speed limit of the road. For example, if the posted speed limit is 35 MPH, then you would need 350 feet of sight distance in both directions, 45 MPH would need 450 feet, etc.

What grades are acceptable?

Driveway approach grades within right of way shall not exceed 8% (a rise or descent of 8 feet in 100 feet) in the urban area or 2% (a rise or descent of 2 feet in 100 feet) in rural areas. Driveway grades shall not exceed ten percent within ten feet of a county road right of way.

Will I need a culvert for drainage?

Some rural approaches will need a culvert. The right of way inspector will advise the permit technician as to what size will be required and you will be notified by mail. A 12 inch diameter is the minimum size culvert allowed with beveled ends no steeper than 1 ½ to 1. Larger size culverts may be required by the county engineer where larger flows occur.

Is any type of culvert acceptable?

No, only 16 gauge galvanized steel is acceptable. Plastic and concrete culverts do not meet county standards.

May I install the culvert myself?

If you wish to install the culvert or you hire a contractor that is not bonded and insured with Spokane County to do the work then it will be necessary to leave a cash surety in lieu of a bond. The check will be deposited in an account and will be refunded to you after the county approves the final inspection.

Do I need to place gravel on the approach?

Crushed rock will be required. 5/8 minus is the largest size allowed in the right of way. A smaller size is also acceptable. On the private portion of your driveway, you may use any size.

Why is the crushed rock on the approach limited to 5/8 minus?

Eventually some of the rock will work its way out into the county road and be picked up in tires, any larger size would crack windshields.

How does the inspector know where my driveway will be?

When you apply for an approach permit you will receive some flagging and be asked to stake and flag your future approach where it meets the county road. This will confirm to the inspector that he has the correct approach described on the permit. If you neglect to flag the approach, you may be required to perform unnecessary right of way construction.

How wide should the approach be?

The fire district requests a minimum 20 foot wide approach in order to accommodate an emergency vehicle.

Do I need an approach permit to modify an existing approach?

A permit is required if you plan to asphalt pave or widen an existing approach or to change the driveway to a new location on your property.

I have trees and shrubs on both sides of my future approach. Will this be a problem?

Trimming or removing trees and shrubs will be a requirement if they are creating a sight distance problem.

What do I need to bring with me in order to obtain an approach permit?

A legal description, parcel number or an Assessor's map.

How much cover do I need on the culvert?

Culverts require 1 foot of cover. See handout E-5, Pipe Compaction and Backfill for more information.

My neighbor claims that a portion of my future driveway will be on his property. Can the inspector verify this?

No, this is a civil matter and does not come under the County's jurisdiction.

Am I allowed to take out a permit for a friend or relative?

Yes, but be advised that the person signing the permit is the one responsible for completing the requirements.

Can I put concrete to the edge of the road?

No, concrete creates a hazard to maintenance equipment and personnel. Keep the concrete back five (5) feet and tie your approach into the county road with asphalt or gravel.

For information or an appointment contact:
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