

## INTRODUCTION

### 1A PURPOSE

The purpose of the driveway permit process is to manage access on the State Highway System. Access regulations are necessary in order to preserve the functional integrity of the State Highway System and to promote the safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

This document is intended to clearly define the process of constructing a legal driveway or other work within the State Highway rights-of-way.

### 1B BACKGROUND

The safety and efficiency of the State Highway System are affected by the amount and character of intersecting streets and driveways. While it is recognized that property owners have certain rights of access, the public also has the right to travel on the road system with relative safety and freedom from interference.

The Georgia Department of Transportation is interested in balancing the often conflicting interests of property owners with those of the general public. As the number of permit requests has continued to increase, the Department has recognized the need to develop a comprehensive set of regulations that is equitable and clearly defined.

In the process of developing these regulations, a survey of the practices of other States was conducted. The resulting regulations are consistent with guidance published by the American Association of Highway and Transportation Officials ([AASHTO](#)), the Federal Highway Administration ([FHWA](#)), and the Institute of Transportation Engineers ([ITE](#)).

### 1C AUTHORITY

The regulations and procedures described in this document are established pursuant to Georgia Code Sections 32-6-51 and 32-6-133.

### 1D WHEN PERMITS ARE REQUIRED

A permit is required prior to performing any construction work or non-routine maintenance within the State Highway Right-of-Way. This includes but is not limited to the following: grading, landscaping, drainage work, temporary access to undeveloped land for logging operations, or construction of a development. Any revisions to any portion of existing driveways, i.e. widening, for existing driveways only, and/or relocation that are within the State Highway Right-of-Way shall also require a permit. If any significant change in land use is requested, the department has the right to refer to the redesign of the commercial driveways. The permit inspector is to consult the local government prior to permit issuance.

In addition to being unlawful, performing the above-described work within the State Highway-Right-Way without a permit, shall entitle the Department to barricade, displace, or otherwise close such driveway and to collect the costs therefore from the violator as provided for in Georgia Code 32-6-134.

Any commercial driveway constructed prior to July 1, 1973, and adjudged by the Department to be unsafe for the traveling public or in violation of Department regulations promulgated pursuant to Code Section 32-6-133 may be changed or caused to be changed by the Department so as to eliminate any unsafe features; or it may be closed or displaced by substitution of another driveway at such a place or of such design as may be deemed safe. Liability for the expense of such change or substitution will be determined in accordance with Code Section 32-6-134.

## 1E DEFINITIONS

The following terms, as used in this document, shall have the following meanings unless the context thereof indicates to the contrary.

### AASHTO

[\(American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials\)](#) which publishes documents in this manual, including [A Policy on Geometric Design](#). (Green Book)

### Acceleration Lane

A speed-change lane, including tapered areas, for the purpose of enabling a vehicle entering the roadway to increase its speed to a rate at which it can more safely merge with through traffic. Also called an "accel lane."

### Access

Entrance to or exit from land adjacent to a public road.

### Access Management Engineer

An engineer whose primary responsibility is to assist applicants with permit applications, plan review and to ensure compliance with the Department's regulations.

### ADT

Average Daily Traffic – The total volume during a given time period (in whole days), greater than one day and less than a year, divided by the number of days in that time period.

### Angle of Two-way Driveway

The angle of deflection measured from the centerline of the nearest travel lane to the centerline of the driveway. An angle of 90 degrees is desirable.

### Applicant

The person or organization that has applied for a permit.

### Categorical Exclusion (C.E.) – Refer to Programmatic Categorical Exclusion

**Clear Zone**

The roadside recovery area should remain free of hazards such as steep embankments, trees, poles, etc. Studies have indicated that on high-speed highways, over 45 mph, a width of 30' or more from the edge of the traveled way permits about 80 percent of the vehicles leaving a roadway out of control to recover safely. For determining clear zones for commercial driveways, use Table 4-11. Use the posted speed limit and the latest available traffic count data (ADT) to enter the table and use the higher distance for "Fill Slopes" 5:1 to 4:1.

**Commercial Driveway**

Any private entrance, exit, ramp, tunnel, bridge, side road or other vehicular passageway to any property used for commercial purposes, 20' or larger (one way), or 24' or larger (two way), except a farm or dwelling house not exceeding a four-family capacity, and leading to or from any public road on the State highway system. (Code 1933, Section 95A-942, enacted by Ga. Law 1973, page 947, section 1.)

**Conceptual Review**

A preliminary review of a site or proposed development for initial comment and discussion on access location and design considerations.

**Deceleration Lane**

A speed-change lane, including tapered areas, for the purpose of enabling a vehicle that is making an exit turn from a roadway to slow to a safe turning speed after it has left the mainstream of faster-moving traffic. Also called a "decel lane"; it denotes a right turn lane or a left turn lane into a development.

**Daylighting**

The process of the removal of vegetation from the right of way to provide visibility for an adjacent business or outdoor advertising sign without a vegetation management permit.

**Department or DOT**

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT).

**Driveway Width**

The narrowest width of a driveway measured perpendicular to centerline of the driveway, from edge of pavement to edge of pavement or edge of gutter to edge of gutter.

**Easement Limited Agreement (ELA)**

A legal document that details the conditions of a utility's rights.

**Encroachment**

The use of state rights-of-way by anyone other than Department personnel or authorized agents for any specific purpose other than that generally intended.

**Engineer**

The Chief Engineer of the Department unless otherwise identified.

**FHWA**

[Federal Highway Administration](#).

**Guidelines**

The proper design of driveways involves a number of design elements. Due to the complexity of the interaction between these design elements, exact design criteria cannot be specified for every possible situation. Therefore, design guidelines are included to assist the designer.

**Interior Drive**

A driveway that is located inside an existing or proposed development which is placed beyond the intersecting driveway that connects to the state highway.

**Interparcel Access**

A roadway or series of connecting roads within a property providing access to interior lot frontage or other properties not connected to a public road or state route.

**Island**

A device used to separate or direct traffic in order to facilitate the safe and orderly movement of vehicles. An island may be a raised area that provides a physical barrier to channel traffic movements or a painted area.

**ITE**

[Institute of Transportation Engineers](#)

**Median Crossover**

An opening constructed in the median strip of a divided highway designed to allow traffic movements to cross from one side of the highway to the other. In some cases, the Access Management Engineer may require the design to be such that some movements be physically prohibited.

**Milepost**

DOT mileposts are the small green and white signs located along state routes numbered in sequence, approximately one mile apart, usually running from south to north or from west to east. All proposed developments are referenced to the nearest milepost at one-tenth mile increments.

**Mitigation**

The partial reduction of the loss of green space by replanting and grassing the disturbed area.

**M.U.T.C.D.**

[The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices](#). (Current Edition)

**Non-commercial Driveway**

A driveway serving a school, government building, church, hospital or other non-commercial organization inviting public use. Design guidelines relating to commercial driveways will be applicable to driveways serving these land uses.

**Permit**

A legal document issued by the Department authorizing an applicant to do specific work on state rights-of-way.

**Permit Inspector**

A technician assigned to a DOT Area Office, with the responsibility of working with the applicant or the applicant's contractor while actual construction is ongoing to ensure construction is in compliance with the Department's policies, regulations, and standards as stated on the approved permit plans. The permit inspector will notify the Permit Engineer when the applicant and the Area Engineer determine that the work is acceptable.

**Programmatic Categorical Exclusion (PCE)**

An environmental document required by the Federal Highway Administration on any permits that will not induce any significant impacts to planned growth, land use, natural, cultural, recreational, or historical sites. This document will also be required for areas that will not involve significant air, noise, or water quality.

**Residential Driveway**

Any private passageway to any property used for dwelling purposes. However, if a driveway provides access for more than four dwelling units, it shall be considered a commercial driveway. Any private access connecting property zoned and used for a residential dwelling. Residential driveways may connect to a public street, roadway, or state route. These driveways may vary from 14 feet to a maximum of 24 feet for two way residential traffic. Driveways providing access to four or more dwelling lots shall be considered commercial access and must comply with commercial design requirements.

**Roadway**

The portion of a highway, including shoulders, for vehicle use.

**Right-of-Way (R/W)**

All land under the jurisdiction of, and whose use is controlled by the Department.

**Right-of-Way Line**

A line that defines the limits of the R/W of a public road as it relates to adjacent property.

**Right-of-Way Miter**

A right-of-way line at an intersection, which is parallel to neither road but forms a triangle with extensions of the R/W lines of the adjacent sides of the intersecting roads. The purpose of the R/W miter is to provide improved visibility for vehicles approaching the intersection by enabling the Department to eliminate visual obstructions or provide room for a traffic signal support pole or guy wire. A driveway should never be allowed along the R/W miter.

**Roadside Design Guide**

AASHTO [Roadside Design Guide](#)

**Sight Distance**

As used in this document, sight distance refers to intersection sight distance, which is the distance that can be seen along the main roadway by the driver of a vehicle on the driveway. The distance is measured based on an eye height of 3.5' and an object height of 3.5'. Sight Distance should be determined to provide adequate time for an entering vehicle to accelerate to within 10 mph of posted speed limit, prior to being overtaken by approaching vehicles. (Refer to AASHTO, Green book)

**Stopping Sight Distance**

The sum of two distances: the distance traversed by the vehicle from the instant the driver sights an object necessitating a stop to the instant the brakes are applied and the distance required to stop the vehicle from the instant brake application begins. Stopping sight distance is measured based on an eye height of 3.5' and an object height of 2.0' or calculated based on future conditions.

**Traveled Way**

The portion of the roadway for the movement of vehicles, exclusive of shoulders and auxiliary lanes.

**Urban Conditions**

This document defines access and spacing criteria separately for urban and rural conditions. Urban conditions typically refer to roadways that have curb & gutter, sidewalks, posted speed limits 45 MPH or below and higher land use density.

**Utility**

All privately, publicly or cooperatively owned water distribution and sanitary sewer facilities and systems for producing, transmitting or distributing communication, cable television, power, electricity, light, heat, gas, oil, crude products, steam, waste and storm water not connected with highway drainage, including river gages, fire and police signals, traffic control devices, and street lighting systems, which directly or indirectly serve the public or any part thereof. The term "utility" may also be used to refer to the owner of any above described utility or utility facility.

**Utility Driveways**

Drive for access to utility sites such as water tanks, water meters, sewer lift stations, telephone service cabinets, power substations or gas regulator sites.

**Utility Facility**

The term "utility facility" shall include but is not limited to, any and all poles, wires, guys, anchors, buried cable, conduit, pedestals, pipe lines, hydrants, valve boxes, manholes, casings, river gages and related fixtures authorized in the permit or agreement.