

CUSTOMER
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SERIES

Fire Department Connection



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POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- A fire apparatus access road is also a fire lane.
- A fire lane is not necessarily a fire apparatus access road.

Fire Lanes Part 1/3 - Definitions, Differences and Dimensions

Learning Objective: The student shall be able to identify the difference between fire lanes and fire apparatus access roads and identify minimum the minimum width.

Since the adoption of the 1971 Uniform Fire Code, fire roads providing adequate access to buildings have been required.

Traditionally, the term “fire road” was used interchangeably with “fire lane” and “fire apparatus access road” as used in previous fire code editions.

However, since the adoption of the 2003 International Fire Code, terms and definitions of the original “fire roads” have been fine tuned.

A Fire Apparatus Access Road is defined as *a road that provides fire apparatus access from a fire station to a facility, building or portion thereof. This is a general term inclusive of all other terms such as fire lane, public street, private street, parking lot lane and access roadway.* Essentially, any drivable surface between a fire station to a building or facility is considered a fire apparatus access road.

A Fire Lane is defined as *a road or other passageway developed to allow the passage of fire apparatus.* A fire lane is not necessarily intended for vehicular traffic other than fire apparatus. In other words, a true fire lane is primarily for fire department use only.



In some instances, fire lanes may also be used by the facility and/or public. When a fire lane is not to be used by anyone but the fire department, the fire lane may be secured by gates or the like.

All fire apparatus access roads are required to be a minimum of 20 feet in width. The theory behind the 20 foot dimension is based on the width of fire apparatus and their operating space requirements.

Typically, fire apparatus are between 9 and 11 feet in width (including mirrors & equipment). Therefore a 20 foot fire lane would generally allow apparatus to pass each other if needed.

A fire department access road with designated fire lane.

Fire apparatus that utilize aerial devices require apparatus stabilization when the aerial device is deployed. The apparatus stabilization comes in the form of outriggers that extend out from the apparatus which provide a wider overall base in which to operate the aerial device. These outriggers, when fully extended, range between 16 and 19 feet. Because of these fire apparatus features, the minimum width of fire lanes is 20 feet.

Part 2 of the Fire Lane series will discuss how required fire lane widths impact available on-street parking.

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