

SAN JOSE FIRE CODE, SECTION 503 FIRE APPARATUS ACCESS ROADS

503.1 Where required

Fire apparatus access roads shall be provided and maintained in accordance with Sections 503.1.1 through 503.1.3.

503.1.1 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 (45 720 mm) 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.

Exception: The Chief is authorized to increase the dimension of 150 feet (45 720 mm) where:

1. The building is equipped throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1 or 903.3.1.3.
2. Fire apparatus access roads cannot be installed because of location on property, topography, waterways, non-negotiable 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.

503.1.2 Additional Access. The Chief 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. A second point of access is required when a fire apparatus access road exceeds 1,000 feet.

503.1.3 High-piled storage

Fire department vehicle access to buildings used for high-piled combustible storage shall comply with the applicable provisions of Chapter 23.

503.2 Specifications. Fire apparatus access roads shall be installed and arranged in accordance with Sections 503.2.1 through 503.2.7. At the discretion of the Chief, if alternative standards for fire apparatus access roads have been approved by the Fire Chief and the Directors of Planning, Building & Code Enforcements, Transportation and Public Works, such alternative standards may be applied.

503.2.1 Dimensions

Fire apparatus access roads shall have an unobstructed width of not less than 20 feet (6096 mm), except for approved security gates in accordance with Section 503.6, and an unobstructed vertical clearance of not less than 13 feet 6 inches (4115 mm).

503.2.2 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.

503.2.3 Surface. Fire apparatus access roads shall be designed and maintained to support the imposed loads of fire apparatus (75,000 pounds) and shall be surfaced so as to provide all weather driving capabilities.

503.2.4 Turning radius

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

503.2.5 Dead ends

Dead-end fire apparatus access roads in excess of 150 feet (45 720 mm) in length shall be provided with an approved area for turning around fire apparatus.

503.2.6 Bridges and elevated surfaces

Where a bridge or an elevated surface is part of a fire apparatus access road, the bridge shall be constructed and maintained in accordance with AASHTO HB-17. Bridges and elevated surfaces shall be designed for a live load sufficient to carry the imposed loads of fire apparatus. Vehicle load limits shall be posted at both entrances to bridges when required by the fire code official. Where elevated surfaces designed for emergency vehicle use are adjacent to surfaces which are not designed for such use, approved barriers, approved signs or both shall be installed and maintained when required by the fire code official.

503.2.7 Grade. The grade of the fire apparatus access road shall not exceed fifteen percent (15%).

503.3 Marking

Where required by the fire code official, approved signs or other approved notices shall be provided for fire apparatus access roads to identify such roads or prohibit the obstruction thereof. Signs or notices shall be maintained in a clean and legible condition at all times and be replaced or repaired when necessary to provide adequate visibility.

503.4 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.

503.5 Required gates or barricades

The fire code official is authorized to require the installation and maintenance of gates or other approved barricades across fire apparatus access roads, trails or other access ways, not including public streets, alleys or highways.

503.5.1 Secured gates and barricades

When required, gates and barricades shall be secured in an approved manner. Roads, trails and other access ways that have been closed and obstructed in the manner prescribed by Section 503.5 shall not be trespassed on or used unless authorized by the owner and the fire code official.

Exception: The restriction on use shall not apply to public officers acting within the scope of duty.

[B] 503.5.2 Fences and gates. School grounds may be fenced and gates therein may be equipped with locks, provided that safe dispersal areas based on 3 square feet (0.28 m²) per occupant are located between the school and the fence. Such required safe dispersal areas shall not be located less than 50feet (15240 mm) from school buildings. Every public and private school shall conform with Section 32020 of the Education Code which states:

The governing board of every public school district, and the governing authority of every private school, which maintains any building used for the instruction or housing of school pupils on land entirely enclosed (except for building walls) by fences or walls, shall, through cooperation with the local law enforcement and fire protection agencies having jurisdiction of the area, make provision for the erection of gates in such fences or walls. The gates shall be of sufficient size to permit the entrance of the ambulances, police equipment and fire-fighting apparatus used by the law enforcement and fire protection agencies. There shall be no less than one such access gate and there shall be as many such gates as needed to ensure access to all major buildings and ground areas. If such gates are to be equipped with locks, the locking devices shall be designed to permit ready entrance by the use of the chain or bolt-cutting devices with which the local law enforcement and fire protection agencies may be equipped.

503.6 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.

504.4 Access Control Devices. When access control devices including bars, grates, gates, electric or magnetic locks or similar devices which would inhibit rapid fire department emergency access to the building are installed, such devices shall be approved by the Chief. All access control devices shall be provided with an approved means for deactivation or unlocking by the Fire Department. Access control devices shall also comply with Chapter 10 for exiting.

505.1 Address Numbers: Approved numbers or addresses shall be placed on all new and existing buildings in such a position as to be plainly visible and legible from the street or road fronting the property. Numbers shall contrast with their background. Subunits of any building or complex, not having individual addresses, shall be identified in a consistent manner, either numerically or alphabetically, using a logical sequence. Unit numbers or letters shall be affixed near the main entrance of each occupancy in such a position as to be plainly visible and legible. Lighted directory maps may be required at building complex entrances or other locations, as specified by the Chief.