
POLICY: FIRE DEPARTMENT EMERGENCY ACCESS ROADWAYS AND SCHOOL DROP OFF AREAS

Division of the State Architect (DSA) documents referenced within this publication are available on the [DSA Forms](#) or [DSA Publications](#) webpages.

DISCIPLINE

Fire and Life Safety

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish requirements based on State Fire Marshal Regulations, Title 19 California Code of Regulations (CCR), and the California Vehicle Code for fire and emergency access roadways on public school or community college campuses, including fire and emergency access roadways combined with student drop-off and pick-up areas. Title 19 CCR does not address issues where the Vehicle Code may impose additional requirements.

BACKGROUND

In the case of fire department emergency access, Title 19 CCR, Article 3, Section 3.05 requires that “Access roads from every building to a public street shall be all-weather hard- surfaced (suitable for use by fire apparatus) right-of-way not less than 20 feet in width.” Such right-of-way shall be unobstructed and maintained only as access to the public street.

The California Vehicle Code (CVC) Section 22500.1 states, “In addition to Section 22500, no person shall stop, park, or leave standing any vehicle, whether attended or unattended, except when necessary to avoid conflict with other traffic or in compliance with the directions of a peace officer or an official traffic control device along the edge of any highway, at any curb, or in any location in a publicly or privately owned or operated off-street parking facility, designated as a fire lane by the fire department or fire district with jurisdiction over the area in which the place is located.”

Many existing California schools have drop-off or pick-up areas for children to either enter or exit a vehicle before and or after school. In most cases these drive aisle areas have a minimum width of 10 feet, and in some cases are parallel with the emergency vehicle access lane.

1. POLICY

1.1 Fire emergency access lanes under the jurisdiction of DSA shall be a minimum of 20 feet wide and have a vertical clearance of not less than 13 feet, 6 inches. Other heights will be accepted at the request of the Local Fire Authority (LFA), and where justification is provided. DSA remains the statutory authority having jurisdiction and has final approval responsibility in all cases.

Each site submittal shall be evaluated based on the project scope of work and retrofit of existing or previously approved configurations will not be required unless modifications or modernizations include fire access lanes or portions thereof, or student drop-off and pick-up areas.

1.2 Fire and emergency vehicle access lanes shall not be combined with or overlap student drop-off or pick-up areas, per the CVC, nor shall the student drop-off or pick-up areas reduce the required 20-foot minimum width of the fire access lanes.

1.3 Where vehicle drop-off areas are parallel with a designated fire access lane, the minimum combined required width shall be no less than 30 feet, and clearly marked per Section 1.5 below.

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1.4 Student drop-off and or pick-up areas shall be configured in such a manner to not obstruct the fire or emergency vehicles when private vehicles arrive and depart, and passengers enter or exit vehicles, per CCR Title 19 and the CVC.

1.5 The designation as a fire lane(s) shall be indicated in accordance with CVC Section 22500.1, by one or more of the following methods:

1.5.1 By installing post mounted signs with minimum dimensions of 18 inches high by 12 inches wide, with red lettering on a white reflective background stating, "NO PARKING – FIRE LANE – CVC 22500.1", or

1.5.2 By outlining the designated area in weather-resistive red traffic grade paint, and in contrasting white color reflecting the words "FIRE LANE – NO PARKING – CVC 22500.1", or

1.5.3 By a red curb or red paint on the edge of the roadway utilizing weather-resistive traffic grade paint, upon which is clearly marked the words 'FIRE LANE – NO PARKING – CVC 22500.1.'

1.6 Distances between posted signs shall be no more than 30 feet, or as required by the local fire authority, and shall continue the full length of the fire access lane, or until one or more of the other approved indication methods are utilized.

1.7 Where emergency vehicle access roadways (fire lanes) are 20 feet to 26 feet in width, the signage required by section 1.5 shall be posted on both sides of the roadway.

1.8 Where emergency vehicle access roadways (fire lanes) are greater than 26 feet in width, but less than 32 feet in width, the signage required by section 1.5 may be posted on one side.

1.9 Vehicles parked in designated fire access lanes on public school campuses are subject to the California Vehicle Code and may be cited, towed, or impounded by local law enforcement authorities.

REFERENCES:

Title 19 California Code of Regulations (CCR) Public Safety, Chapter 1, Subchapter 1, Article 3, Section 3.05
CCR Title 24, Part 9, California Fire Code, Section 503.3
California Vehicle Code, Section 22500.1

A DSA Policy is a formally established set of governing statements based on law and code objectives, addressing any aspect of DSA's plan and construction review program that is not clearly addressed by code. A Policy also may specify administrative or technical requirements that are not yet addressed within Title 24, but are deemed important and necessary to fulfill code objectives in advance of adoption into the code.