



**MaineDOT**

**Your Guide  
to Permits for  
Driveways  
and Entrances**



# Access Management: Balancing Access and Traffic Flow

Access Management balances safe access to property with “mobility,” or traffic flow. In order to achieve this balance, [anyone installing a driveway or entrance along a state highway must get a permit from MaineDOT.](#) State law mandates that even if you intend to “change use” of your entrance, (for example from strictly residential to residential and small business) a permit must be obtained from MaineDOT. Further, recent amendments to the law state that local building permits (including subdivisions) involving access to property on a state or state-aid highway may not be issued without first having the MaineDOT permit approved.

*While safety is always a top priority, MaineDOT also considers economic development and efficient traffic flow when reviewing access applications.*

MaineDOT’s Access Management Program sets up a permitting process for property owners who will impact a state roadway by:

- constructing a driveway or entrance, or
- changing a current driveway in a way that will increase traffic volume, or create a safety or drainage concern.

Municipalities may also have their own access management rules on local roads or within designated “urban compact areas.” Always check with your local officials and MaineDOT to be sure you are aware of all the requirements. Also, when local rules differ from state rules, the **stricter** of the two applies.

# Why is it so important?

## Access Management:

**Increases Safety** by assuring predictable, well-designed and highly visible locations for oncoming traffic. On higher-speed highways, designed for long distance travel, fewer access points mean fewer potential hazards and safer travel.

**Supports Economic Productivity** by minimizing traffic delays, congestion, and conflicts through the well-planned location and design of driveways or entrances.

**Controls Public Costs** by avoiding highway congestion, improving safety, restoring healthy air, and repairing runoff damage. Congestion negatively affects safety, clean air, and productivity. Poorly designed driveways can create road-damaging runoff.

**Promotes Community & Environmental Quality** by supporting strong local planning that results in livable places with opportunities for walking and bicycling to work, school, or shopping. Building on high-speed highways at the edge of a community can undermine historic downtowns and increase reliance on cars. That over-reliance quickly clogs up Maine's arterial highway system, which is intended to provide long-distance connections between major business centers and their employment opportunities. Replacing that resource is too difficult and too expensive to allow unplanned access that will ultimately degrade both safety and efficiency.

# Who is affected by access and the permitting process?

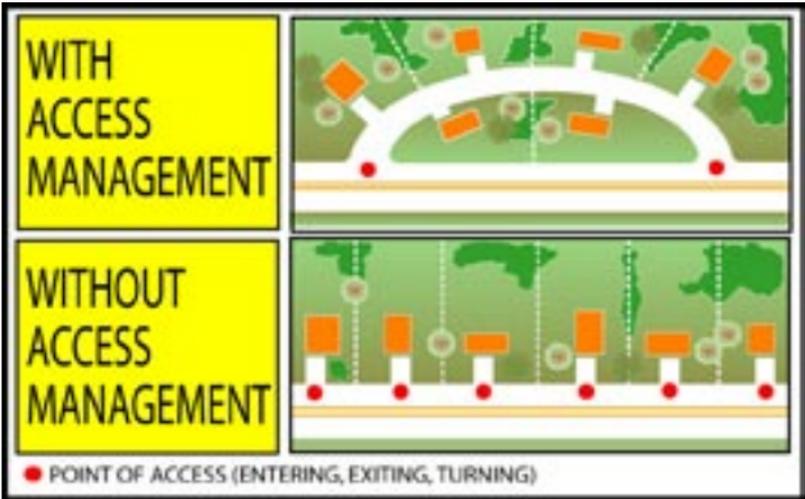
**Everyone** traveling on Maine's roads or living in Maine communities is affected by access management. Because the general public can suffer or benefit from these planning decisions, the permitting process helps everyone.

**A landowner or developer** planning to build a home or business, or subdividing land abutting a state or state-aid highway must obtain a permit from MaineDOT before building a driveway or entrance onto that highway.

**Local tax assessors, code enforcement officers, and planning boards** should be aware that PRIOR to issuing any local permits, they must see a MaineDOT permit for driveways or entrances. If not, they may unintentionally support the creation of lots that won't be granted an access permit by MaineDOT because they provide inadequate spacing between access points or lack sight distance.

**Lending institutions, engineers, designers, surveyors, and real estate agents** should advise buyers and sellers of land on a state or state-aid highway of Maine's access rules.

**Earthwork contractors and builders** should understand these rules and their requirements. On some highways, posted speed limits determine a mandated distance between adjacent driveways. Lots that can't meet these "separation standards" could be denied a permit.



## How much does a MaineDOT permit cost?

MaineDOT permits are free. However, depending on the highway and the intensity of the proposed development, applicants may be required to alleviate the traffic impacts of their proposed entrance onto the highway.

## When did these access rules take effect?

The rules took effect in May 2002, and were amended in November 2003 and June 2004.

## Are ALL state roads subject to the access rules?

No. Roads within Urban Compact limits don't fall under these rules. There are 43 Urban Compact municipalities. If you are seeking a permit along a state highway within one of the following municipalities (see back panel), please ask your local officials whether your land is inside or outside the Urban Compact limits. If it's outside the boundaries, you will need a MaineDOT permit.

## Urban Compact Municipalities

Auburn  
Augusta  
Bangor  
Bath  
Belfast  
Biddeford  
Brewer  
Brunswick  
Cape Elizabeth  
Caribou  
Fairfield  
Falmouth  
Farmington  
Freeport  
Gardiner

Gorham  
Houlton  
Kennebunk  
Kittery  
Lewiston  
Lisbon  
Millinocket  
Old Orchard  
Old Town  
Orono  
Portland  
Presque Isle  
Rockland  
Saco  
Sanford

Scarborough  
Skowhegan  
South Portland  
Rumford  
Standish  
Topsham  
Waterville  
Wells  
Westbrook  
Windham  
Winslow  
Yarmouth  
York

## How can I get more information?

For a copy of the rules or to request an application, contact the MaineDOT Region Office nearest you (see map). You can also go to the MaineDOT web page: <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/traffic/>

The web page includes a copy of the rules, maps showing each region, including state roadways, and Urban Compact Municipalities which may have different rules regarding access management depending on the exact location of the land.



***The Maine Department of Transportation manages the state's transportation system which includes more than 8,000 miles of roads, nearly 3,000 bridges, and 36 public airports, as well as rail and ferry services.***