



TOWN OF HOPKINTON
FIRE DEPARTMENT
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Hopkinton Fire Department driveway access Policy

Background.

The Fire Department (Department) is required to respond to a multitude of emergencies in various types of buildings and occupancies. These include single-family dwellings, apartment buildings, shopping malls, business complexes, industrial complexes, hospitals, and nursing homes. To provide effective firefighting operations, the Department must be able to reach all structures by way of approved access roadways, streets, or private driveways.

This directive shall assist developers and designers in meeting the requirements for Department access, by defining terms and listing minimum design standards considered necessary for effective firefighting operations.

Access guidelines.

The following guidelines represent the Department's efforts to maintain consistency concerning Department emergency access. It is the Department's responsibility to ensure adequate access for Department emergency responders. Planning for access by emergency vehicles improves safety for the homeowners and their families by providing for a more efficient response by firefighters and other emergency personnel arriving on scene.

Definitions:

Private driveway: A means of access designed for use of no more than two occupied single-family dwelling units or one occupied two-family dwelling unit.

Pull-Outs: A portion of the driveway that allows emergency vehicles to pass one another and private vehicles on one-lane driveways during emergency operations.

Standards:

Driveway Width, Height, and Grade:

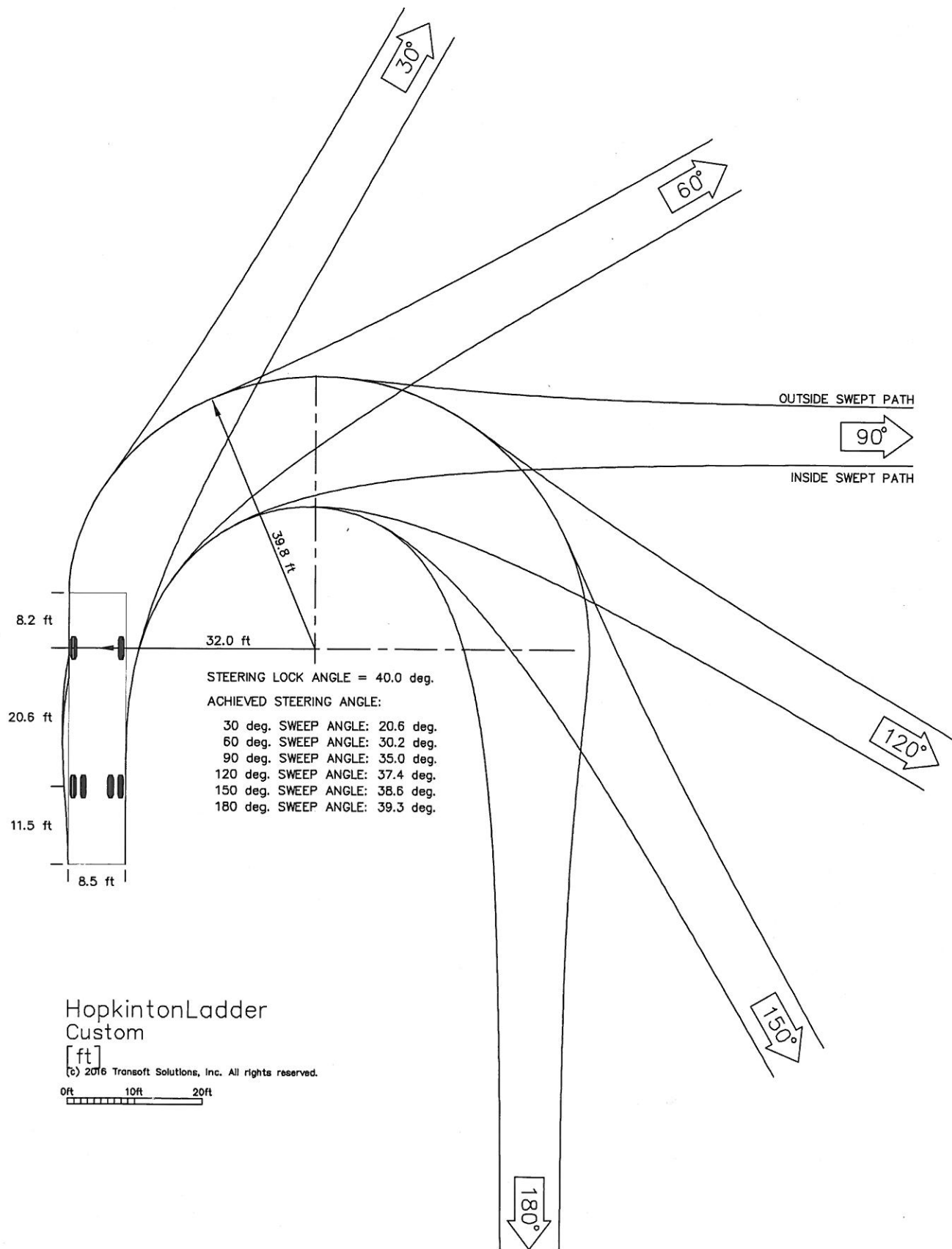
In order for emergency vehicles to safely access your property, your driveway must have a clean, dry all-weather surface that is able to provide adequate support for large, heavy vehicles. This may require civil engineering design, swept path analysis and certification as deemed necessary on a case-by-case basis.

In order to allow for the passage of large vehicles such as fire engines, driveways are required to have an unobstructed vertical clearance of 13 feet, 6 inches. This may require limbing and/or removing trees and brush to provide the necessary vertical clearance

- Driveways need to have a 12-foot wide drivable surface, with a 2-foot shoulder or clear zone on each side of the driveway (16-foot clearance overall).
- Pull-outs must be provided if the driveway is greater than 500 feet in length. They must be designed to be sufficient length and width for emergency equipment to pass one another, while at the same time minimizing site disturbance. Typically the pullout is 8' wide. In combination with the 12' wide driveway, this creates a 20' wide section. Pullouts need to be at least 50' long to accommodate a fire engine.
- When a bridge or culvert is required to be used as a part of the driveway access, it shall be constructed and maintained in accordance with nationally recognized standards. The bridge or culvert shall be designed for a live load sufficient to carry the imposed loads of fire apparatus. Vehicle load limits shall be posted at the entrance to any bridge.
- Emergency vehicles are very heavy and will not cross bridges that do not have a sufficient posted weight capacity. The load limits for a bridge must be posted at both entrances of the bridge.
- Grade must also be considered. The maximum grade for a driveway is 10%.
- Sharp turns are discouraged. The minimum centerline radius for a driveway curve is 40 feet, with a maximum 5% grade through the curve. The drive may need to be straightened or rerouted around rock outcrops and steep banks to achieve this.
- Adequate turnarounds must be provided if over 500 feet in length.
- Gated access shall provide a Knox Box with the appropriate key installed.
- Nothing in this Section shall reduce the requirements established by cities or towns under M.G.L. 40A and planning and zoning by-laws.
- All weather surfaces are constructed to support the weight of emergency vehicles.
- Permeable drivable surfaces that meet loading requirements of our emergency vehicles are allowed when approved by the Department. When approved, the permeable surfaces shall be identified by a method acceptable to the Fire Department.

Access Maintenance: The owner or occupant of a structure or area, with required fire department access or private driveway shall notify the Fire Chief or designee when the access is modified.

The Town assumes no maintenance responsibility for private driveways.



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