

access management

on Alberta highways



What is an access?

An access is a location where vehicles enter, leave or cross a provincial highway, such as a private driveway or public roadway.

Limiting access

Safety is the primary reason for limiting access to a highway. Each new access creates potential conflict points between vehicles travelling at highway speeds and slower moving vehicles that may be entering, leaving or crossing a highway.

Even when there are no vehicles using an access, the roadway approaches can create a dangerous obstacle for vehicles. In Alberta, six to ten per cent of collisions and fatalities on rural provincial highways are as a result of striking accesses.

Access management

Alberta Transportation manages where accesses are located and the design of highway accesses. This includes reviewing applications for new accesses, reviewing applications to improve existing accesses, and consolidating and removing accesses.

Guidelines for access management

Alberta Transportation has general guidelines to identify where accesses should be located, based on the classification of the highway and its traffic volume.

| Highway Classification | Traffic Volume | Access |
|--|---|---|
| Freeways Major economic corridors (includes core routes in the National Highway System)* | Typically more than 10,000 vehicles per day | Limited to interchange locations |
| Expressways Multi-lane divided highways | Typically more than 10,000 vehicles per day | Generally limited to intersections with arterial and collector highways |
| Arterial Highways Major 2-lane highways | Typically more than 1,000 vehicles per day | Generally located at intersections with collector roadways |
| Collector Highways Minor 2-lane highways | Typically less than 1,000 vehicles per day | Should be limited to one access per quarter section |

* Freeway locations are legislated and include Highway 1, Highway 2 (between Fort MacLeod and Edmonton), Highway 3, Highway 4, Highway 16, Highway 43, Highway 63, and the Edmonton and Calgary ring roads.

When does the province review access management?

There are four main reasons why the province would review the access management of a highway.

1. Safety - the province reviews access management when there is a safety concern.
2. Subdivision of land - the province reviews access management when it receives notification of a subdivision application from the municipality.
3. New development - the province reviews access management when it receives an application from a landowner, municipality, or developer for a new development that will generate additional traffic.
4. Highway improvements - the province reviews access management as part of the planning process for current and future highway improvements.

Immediate and short term access

Alberta Transportation understands that many proposed developments require immediate and short-term access, while future highway improvements may be years away.

There are many alternatives and options to protect an area for an ultimate highway status in the future that will allow immediate access concerns to be addressed.

Alberta Transportation manages each development application request on an individual basis and will work to resolve local concerns whenever possible. Questions about a specific development or access request should be directed to Alberta Transportation.

Application for roadside developments

Landowners and developers should contact their local municipality about proposed developments. In addition to contacting the municipality, a permit from Alberta Transportation is required for roadside developments within the development control zone (300 metres from the provincial right-of-way or within 800 metres of the centerline of a highway and public road intersection).

A permit from Alberta Transportation is also required to install or change a sign within the development control zone.

Application forms and instructions are available online at www.transportation.alberta.ca/613.htm

Resolving concerns

Applicants are encouraged to discuss any concerns they may have with the engineer or development technologist who reviewed their application. Alternatives and new options can often be identified to quickly resolve local concerns. If the concerns have not been addressed following these discussions, the application can be brought forward to the Operations Manager. If the alternatives and options presented by the Operations Manager do not resolve the concern, the application can be reviewed by the Regional Director.

Contact information

If you have any questions about a roadside development application or an access management concern, please contact your nearest Alberta Transportation district office. A list of contact names for the development planning staff at each of the district offices is available online at www.transportation.alberta.ca/613.htm

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| Athabasca | 780-675-2624 |
| Calgary | 403-297-6311 |
| Edson | 780-723-8250 |
| Fort McMurray | 780-743-7376 |
| Grande Prairie | 780-538-5310 |
| Hanna | 403-854-5550 |
| Lethbridge | 403-381-5426 |
| Peace River | 780-624-6280 |
| Red Deer | 403-340-5200 |
| Stony Plain | 780-963-5711 |
| Vermilion | 780-853-8178 |

