

Fire Routes

It is prohibited to obstruct, encumber, damage or alter a designated fire route. Designated fire routes ensure that the Fire Department can prevent the spread of fire, reduce property and environmental damage, and most importantly, reduce injuries or death. The requirements for when a fire route is required, how it is constructed, identified and approved are all laid out in several pieces of legislation, which are:

- City of St. Catharines, By-law No. 89-304 – Fire Routes
- Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13
- Ontario Building Code, O. Reg. 332/12
- Ontario Fire Code, O.Reg 213/07
- Fire Protection and Prevention Act, S.O. 1997, c.4



The principle reason for a Fire Route By-law is to designate fire routes which have already been required through site plan and building permit approvals, processes or by order of the Fire Chief for existing buildings, to require specified signs, and to provide the authority to control traffic in fire routes by establishing penalties for parking or stopping violations.

Legislated Requirements for Fire Routes

The *Ontario Building Code* includes provisions for firefighting and specifies that buildings of a certain size be required to have access routes for fire department vehicles. It specifically defines minimum requirements for the location and design of fire routes.

Although the requirements of fire routes are largely governed under the *Ontario Building Code*, the *Ontario Fire Code* states the following:

- **Maintaining Access Free of Obstructions**

Fire access routes and access panels or windows provided to facilitate access for fire fighting operations shall not be obstructed by vehicles, gates, fences, building materials, vegetation, signs or any other form of obstruction.
(Ontario Fire Code O.Reg 213/07 Division B, 2.5.1.2.(1))

Fire Department sprinkler and standpipe connections shall be clearly identified and maintained free of obstructions at all times.
(Ontario Fire Code O.Reg 213/07 Division B, 2.5.1.2.(2))

- **Maintenance**

Fire access routes shall be maintained so as to be immediately ready for use at all times by fire department vehicles.
(Ontario Fire Code O.Reg 213/07 Division B, 2.5.1.3)

- **Signs**

Approved signs shall be displayed to indicate fire access routes.
(Ontario Fire Code O.Reg 213/07 Division B, 2.5.1.4)

The *Fire Protection and Prevention Act* provides municipalities with the authority to pass a by-law designating **private roads** as fire routes along which no parking of vehicles shall be permitted, and providing for the removal and impounding of any vehicle parked or left unattended along a fire route at the expense and risk of the vehicle's owner. "**Private road**", in this context means any private road, lane, ramp or other means of vehicular access to or from a building or structure and may include part of a parking lot.

The Fire Protection and Prevention Act also provides the Fire Chief with broad Inspection Authority to ensure fire safety, including authority to order an owner or occupant of land to take measures to ensure fire safety.

The *Planning Act* provides that as a condition to the approval of site plans, a municipality may require the owner of the land to provide to the satisfaction of and at no expense to the municipality, access driveways, including driveways for emergency vehicles.

Fire Route Drawing Requirements:

When submitting a Fire Route Drawing for approval through the City of St. Catharines, the following criteria are required with your submission. In the event any of the below are missing or not followed, the plan will be returned for revision to comply with the criteria

- Submitted digitally in .pdf format
- 8.5" x 14" paper size
- Provide a 1" margin
- Use symbols consistent with those shown in the Legend on the example drawings
- Information to be provided on the drawing includes:
 - Fire access route (demarcated by a solid black line to show 6 metre width of route)
 - Fire hydrants
 - Fire department connections
 - Fire route signage
 - All buildings and structures on the site with the use labelled (e.g. "4 Storey Residential," "Elementary School," etc.)
 - Municipal streets and street names adjacent to the property
 - Private street names located on the property
 - Municipal address(es)
 - North arrow

Example of a Fire Route Plan

