

WAC 468-51-030 General provisions. (1) When connection permits required. Every owner of property which abuts a state highway, or has a legal easement to the state highway, where limited access rights have not been acquired has a right to reasonable access, but may not have the right to a particular means of access, to the state highway system. The right of access to the state highway may be restricted if, in compliance with local regulation, reasonable access to the state highway can be provided by way of another public road which abuts the property. These public roads shall be of sufficient width and strength to reasonably handle the traffic type and volumes that would be accessing that road. All new connections including alterations and improvements to existing connections to state highways shall require a connection permit. Such permits, if allowed, shall be issued only after written development approval where such approval is required, unless other interagency coordination procedures are in effect. However, the department can provide a letter of intent to issue a connection permit if that is a requirement of the agency that is responsible for development approval. The alteration or closure of any existing access connection caused by changes to the character, intensity of development, or use of the property served by the connection or the construction of any new access connection shall not begin before a connection permit is obtained from the department. Use of a new connection at the location specified in the permit is not authorized until the permit holder constructs or modifies the connection in accordance with the permit requirements. If a property owner or permit holder who has a valid connection permit wishes to change the character, use, or intensity of the property or development served by the connection, the department must be contacted to determine whether a new connection permit would be required.

(2) Responsibility for other approvals. Connection permits authorize construction improvements to be built by the permit holder on department right of way. It is the responsibility of the applicant or permit holder to obtain any other local permits or other agency approvals that may be required, including satisfaction of all environmental regulations. It is also the responsibility of the applicant to acquire any property rights necessary to provide continuity from the applicant's property to the state highway right of way if the applicant's property does not abut the right of way, except where the connection replaces an existing access as a result of department relocation activity.

(3) Early consultation. In order to expedite the overall permit review process, the applicant is strongly encouraged to consult with the department prior to and during the local government subdivision, rezoning, site plan, or any other applicable predevelopment review process for which a connection permit will be required. The purpose of the consultation shall be to determine the permit category and to obtain a conceptual review of the development site plan and proposed access connections to the state highway system with respect to department connection location, quantity, spacing, and design standards. Such consultation will assist the developer in minimizing problems and delays during the permit application process and could eliminate the need for costly changes to site plans when unpermittable connection proposals are identified early in the planning phase. The conceptual review process is further detailed in WAC 468-51-050.

(4) Cost of construction.

(a) Permit holder. The cost of construction or modification of a connection shall be the responsibility of the permit holder, including

the cost of modification of any connection required as a result of changes in property site use in accordance with WAC 468-51-110. However, the permit holder is not responsible for alterations made at the request of the department that are not required by law or administrative rule.

(b) Department. Existing permitted connections impacted by the department's work program and which, in the consideration of the department, necessitate modification, relocation, or replacement in order to meet current department connection location, quantity, spacing, and design standards, shall be modified, relocated, or replaced in kind by the department at no cost to the permit holder. The cost of further enhancements or modification to the altered, relocated, or replaced connections requested by the permit holder shall be the responsibility of the permit holder.

(5) Notification. The department shall notify affected property owners, permit holders, business owners and/or emergency services, in writing, where appropriate, whenever the department's work program requires the modification, relocation, or replacement of their access connections. In addition to written notification, the department shall facilitate, where appropriate, a public process which may include, but is not limited to, public notices, meetings or hearings, and/or individual meetings. The department shall provide the interested parties with the standards and principles of access management.

(6) Department responsibility. The department has the responsibility to issue permits and authority to approve, disapprove, and revoke such permits, and to close connections, with cause.

[Statutory Authority: Chapter 47.50 RCW. WSR 99-06-034 (Order 187), § 468-51-030, filed 2/25/99, effective 3/28/99. Statutory Authority: RCW 47.01.101 and chapter 47.50 RCW. WSR 92-14-044, § 468-51-030, filed 6/24/92, effective 7/25/92.]