



CHARLESTON FIRE DEPARTMENT



Fire Marshal Division

Information Bulletin

Fire Apparatus Access Roads Limited Area Structures

The purpose of this document is to further clarify conditions that must be achieved in order to provide for an increase in the distance between the fire apparatus access route and specific structures of limited size. These considerations are based on the application and interpretation of the applicable code provisions and operational considerations of the Charleston Fire Department. The information contained within this document is intended to offer guidance in the design, layout, or position of a small structure.

The International Fire Code Chapter 5, Section 503, addresses fire apparatus access roads for all buildings. This section requires fire apparatus access roads to extend to within 150' of all portions of the facility and all portions of the exterior walls of the first floor. Specific exceptions are provided to identify when the Fire Code Official is authorized to increase the dimension of the 150 foot limitation.

The distance between the fire apparatus access route and the limited area structure may be increased to no more than 250' when fire apparatus access roads cannot be installed due to location on property, topography, waterways, nonnegotiable grades or similar conditions which make the installation or extension of the route impractical. The plan submittal must demonstrate the need for this increase and the following alternate means of fire protection and safety measures are in place:

- 1) Type I or II construction and limited to 1,500 square feet or Type III, IV, or V construction and limited to 500 square feet.
- 2) Building is not used for residential or sleeping purposes (non-habitable space).
- 3) Not less than 50' of clearance provided on all sides to adjacent structures, or property lines.
- 4) No open flame ignition sources, grills, portable heaters, or similar devices located within 25' of the structure.

These measures are designed to provide a reasonable degree of safety to the public and first responders by limiting or reducing the potential risk of a fire event. This document is intended to provide general guidance during the design phase of a project and may be reduced or revoked by the Fire Code Official for due cause.

Please contact the City of Charleston Fire Department – Fire Marshal Division at (843)724-3429 with any questions or for additional information.