Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to assist our customers in determining when they may need a gate permit, and for those that do need a permit, it is intended to be an aid in designing, permitting and obtaining necessary inspections. Applicants, who design, submit and request inspections in accordance with this guide should find the permitting process to be much easier. Alternatives to the design criteria contained in this guide may be submitted, but additional review time may be necessary to verify compliance with the applicable ordinances and ensure emergency vehicle access.

A number of the most commonly asked questions are addressed in this guide. For a complete reference of the applicable ordinances refer to the following three documents: Title 17B- Construction and Infrastructure Regulations-Road and Bridge Design and Construction Standards, the Manual on Design Guidelines and Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction in Pierce County; and Title 17C- Construction and Infrastructure Regulations-Building and Fire Codes (Section 17C.60).

Do I Need a Gate Permit?

A gate permit is required if a gate is constructed on or after January 1, 1992 across a residential driveway.

A permit for the gate is a permit to install the gate and its related components. It is not a permit to perform access/driveway construction. A site development permit is a permit to perform access/driveway and other associated site development work; it is not a permit to construct a gate.

The need for a site development permit can be determined prior to submitting the gate permit by requesting a determination by Development Engineering Technical support staff at the Pierce County Development Center, Pierce County Annex, 2401 S. 35th Street, Tacoma. Current hours of business are 9:00 - 2:00, Monday to Friday except holidays.
Application Fee
Correct fees paid in accordance with current fee schedule as adopted by County Council. See Pals Web Page at www.piercecountywa.org/pals, County Code, Title 2, Chapter 2.05 Planning and Land Services Fees.

Parameters of the Design Guide
A number of guidelines were used in the writing of this document that the reader should be aware of in order to fully understand the intent of the guide.

- Existing Ordinance was used to develop this guide.
- Field measured turn radius data of Pierce County Fire Department ladder trucks were used.
- The emergency vehicle must be able to turn onto the gated driveway while remaining in its lane at the initiation of the turn. Future roadway projects may create a barrier between the lanes, such as a median, that would preclude the emergency vehicle from initiating a turn from another lane.
- The emergency vehicle must be able to complete any turns necessary to access the gated driveway.

The following are some elements of gate design you need to know before you begin.

A gate design takes into consideration a number of characteristics that will serve the interest of a number of different users: the traveling public, the occupants served by the gate and emergency vehicles. Some items that a designer should consider in the planning, construction and operation of a gate include the following:

- Provides adequate protection for the residents/occupants served by the gate.
- Is designed, constructed and maintained to operate properly for the life of the gate.
- Allows vehicles, in particular emergency vehicles, to pass through the gate without difficulty.

Gate Setbacks
Gates serving one single family residence shall be setback from the road right-of-way and/or easement a minimum of twenty feet. Gates are exempt from building setback requirements to property lines and private roads.

Parcels that are adjacent to public road right-of-ways may be subject to setbacks measured from a future right-of-way (FROW). Contact the Development Engineering Technical support staff at 253-798-3150, 253-798-7135 or visit us online and use “About My Property” to determine if your parcel has a FROW need. Internet directions to “About My Property” are located on page six.

Clear Width (Traveled Way)
Minimum clear width for a residential driveway gate serving a single family dwelling unit is fifteen feet between posts and/or, gate panel, gate latches or hinges which ever is the narrowest measurement when the gate is in the open position. Gates must open to
provide unobstructed access to all portions of the traveled way. The traveled way width is determined by ordinance. **NOTE:** If two dwelling units are on site the clear width is twenty four feet. See Appendix “E”.

### Keypads and Keypad Islands

Keypads shall be located such that there is no interference with emergency vehicles entering or exiting the site. The post and face of the keypad shall be located 1 foot back from the traveled way. Keypad pedestals may be placed on islands. Keypad islands shall not be located in the traveled way.

### Gate Height

Gates or support posts that are **higher than six feet** are required to have project specific structural plans, details and calculations stamped by a Professional Engineer licensed by the State of Washington. The details and calculations need to address the size and specifications of gate panels, columns, support arms, welds, footings, concrete, anchor bolts and any other structural elements specific to the project. The height is measured per Appendix “E”.

### Rapid Entry Key Devices

Rapid entry devices allow the emergency vehicle to enter through a locked gate if you are not home or unable to open the gate upon the emergency vehicle’s arrival. Rapid entry systems (Knox key switch, box or padlock, or approved equivalent) are required to be **installed on all gates**. An **electrically operated gate** shall be equipped with a Knox key switch. The switch shall open the gate on activation of the switch and gate shall remain open until reset. **Manually operated gates** shall be provided with your access key located in a Knox key box or use a Knox padlock.

The Knox key switch or box shall be located on the right-hand side gate post as the vehicle enters at **four feet** in height, see Appendix “E”.

**NOTE:** Only your local Fire District has the ability to access/open the gate using the rapid entry device. The keys needed to open the devices are not available for public purchase.

### How to Find Rapid Entry Devices

Rapid entry devices must be compatible with County Fire Districts and Fire Codes. Order forms for rapid-entry system components are available through the local Fire District serving the property. You can determine which fire district you are in by visiting us online and use “**About My Property**” to find your local Fire District. Internet directions to “**About My Property**” are located on page six. Appendix “B” has a list of the Fire Districts contact telephone numbers.

You can also telephone the Development Center information line at 253-798-3739. Your parcel number or address is required to determine the Fire District.
Electric Gates

Gates operated by electricity require an **electrical permit** from the appropriate local agency. A copy of the approved permit must be submitted to Development Engineering Inspection before calling for final inspection. You may fax or mail the approved permit. See page six for fax and mailing instructions to Development Engineering Inspection.

Safety Loop System

Safety loops and loop detectors are required when **electrically activated gates** are proposed. Safety loops shall prevent a gate from opening or closing when a vehicle is detected by the loop detector. Photo reactive and “wand” style sensors are not considered an acceptable alternative. They may be installed as a supplement to a loop system.

Safety loops are installed a minimum 4’ from the gate on either side. The loops should be no farther apart than 19 feet, the average length of a personal vehicle. Length, width and depth will be determined by the manufacture. An exit loop can also be installed. The exit loop will automatically open the gate for you to exit.

Snow Clearance

Swing type gates shall have a minimum of six inches of clearance between the bottom of gate and the traveled surface, through its entire operating arc, to ensure operation during snowy weather.

You are now ready to design your gate. See Appendix “C” for gate design and submittal requirements. Also see Appendix “A” for definitions.

How to Apply For a Permit

For a gate permit, your application should include all the items identified in Appendix “C”, “Gate Submittal Requirements”. You will need four complete sets of the required items. Bring the complete package to the Development Center located in the Pierce County Annex, 2401 South 35th Street, Tacoma between 9:00 and 2:00 Monday – Friday. Gate reviews are typically completed within four weeks.

Gate Operational Test Form

When your gate permit is issued you will receive a copy of your permit, a set of stamped approved plans and a **Gate Operational Test** (GOT) form. Before the Development Engineering final inspection your local Fire District must visit your property to inspect the gate and complete the GOT form. You must provide the GOT form at the Fire District
inspection. To contact your Fire District to arrange for an inspection see Appendix B for phone numbers. You must submit the GOT form to your Development Engineering Inspector before the final gate inspection. You may fax or mail the GOT form. See page six for fax and mailing instructions.

When to Call for Inspection

A. Gates or supports that are **six feet or less** in height require **two inspections**, one fire district inspection and at least one Development Engineering inspection:

1. Your local fire district (see Appendix “B” for phone numbers) should be contacted to for an inspection when the gate has been completely installed and is operational. The applicant is responsible for having the Gate Operation Test form available on-site for the fire district to complete and for forwarding the results to Development Engineering Inspection.

2. A Development Engineering final inspection can be scheduled when all of the following items have been completed:
   
   - The gate and its related components have been completely installed and gate is operational.
   - The local fire district inspection is completed and Gate Operation Test form sent to Development Engineering
   - A copy of the approved electrical permit has been sent to Development Engineering Inspection.

B. Gates or supports that **exceed six feet** in height require **three inspections**, one fire district test and two Development Engineering inspections:

1. The first inspection for gates over 6’ is the gate post footing/foundation. It can be scheduled with Development Engineering after all excavation is complete, after forms are erected and reinforcing material is installed. **Concrete should not be poured until the inspector finds the form work and reinforcing acceptable.**

2. Then follow inspection directions for gates that are six feet or less.

Requesting Development Engineering Inspections

Inspections with the Development Engineering Section may be scheduled by telephone or over the Internet. Telephone request are made by calling Pierce County’s Permit and Application Status System (PASS) at 253-798-4900 or 253-798-7290. The gate permit number is needed to schedule inspections. The call will also have to be placed using a touch tone phone. Internet requests are made at [http://palsonline.co.pierce.wa.us/palsonline/permitsearch](http://palsonline.co.pierce.wa.us/palsonline/permitsearch). You must be a registered user of the site to schedule/cancel inspections.
Development Engineering Inspection Results

Development Engineering inspection results will be posted on site unless otherwise requested by you or your contractor. Inspection results can also by obtained by visiting the Pierce County web page at [http://palsonline.co.pierce.wa.us/palsonline/permitsearch](http://palsonline.co.pierce.wa.us/palsonline/permitsearch). Inspection results are usually available on the web by the next business day.

**How to Find “About My Property” on PALS Website**

“About My Property” provides basic parcel information. You can find future right-of-way needs, your fire or school district, zoning and environmental information. You will need the parcel number or address.

Go to [www.piercecountywa.org/pals](http://www.piercecountywa.org/pals) at the bottom of the right hand column click on “About My Property”. You will need to accept the terms of use. Then choose if you want to search by address or parcel number. When you get to the screen labeled “Very Important Notes” scroll down for the parcel information.

**How to Fax, Mail or E-mail to Development Engineering Inspection.**

You can **FAX** an approved copy of the electrical permit or Gate Operational Test form to Development Engineering Inspection at **253-798-2626**.

You can also **MAIL** the approved permit using the address below or on the top left corner of your permit.

**Planning and Land Services, 2401 South 35th Street, Suite 2, Tacoma, WA 98409 Attention: Development Engineering Inspection.**

Or you can **E-MAIL** the information to [dmersho@co.pierce.wa.us](mailto:dmersho@co.pierce.wa.us).

Please note your gate permit number on all correspondence.
Appendix “A”

Definitions

Clear Width: The narrowest distance between two gate supports and/or hinges, latches or gate panel when the gate is in an open position that an object could pass through. See Appendix “E”.

Driveway: A vehicle driving surface within a parcel that connects a building/structure with a road.

Dwelling Unit: One or more rooms designed for one family for living purposes and containing kitchen, sleeping and sanitary facilities for use solely by one family.

Island: A defined area between traffic lanes for control of vehicle movements and/or pedestrian refuge.

Private Road: A road/traveled way in private ownership providing private access and used for travel of vehicles by the owner(s) or those having express or implied permission from the owner(s). Private roads are generally located in a tract or easement.

Shared Access Facility: A privately owned drivable surface which serves four lots in the rural area and two lots in the urban area for access to single family and two family dwelling units.

Traveled Way: That portion of the roadway used for the movement of vehicles. The traveled way width is determined by Title 17C for Emergency Vehicle access and Title 17B for road and bridge design.

Rapid Entry Systems: A mechanism to allow emergency responders to open locked gates. Keys to open the devices are not available for public purchase.

Gate Operational Test form: A form provided with the issued permit. The form is for the Fire District written inspection results.

Catalog Cut Sheets: Provides model numbers, product information and typically a picture of the product. Cut Sheets can be found on line at manufacture’s or vender’s websites.
### Appendix “B”

#### Fire District Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District No.</th>
<th>District Name</th>
<th>Office Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sumner</td>
<td>(253) 863-1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lakewood</td>
<td>(253) 582-4600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>University Place</td>
<td>(253) 564-1623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gig Harbor</td>
<td>(253) 851-3111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Central Pierce</td>
<td>(253) 538-6400</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Edgewood</td>
<td>(253) 927-2313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Fife</td>
<td>(253) 591-5798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>North Puyallup</td>
<td>(253) 845-6666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Buckley</td>
<td>(253) 863-1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Brown’s Point</td>
<td>(253) 952-4776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>(253) 992-5644</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>South Pierce</td>
<td>(253) 847-4333</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Key Peninsula</td>
<td>(253) 884-2222</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Roy</td>
<td>(253) 843-2424</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Orting</td>
<td>(360) 893-7857</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>South Prairie</td>
<td>(360) 863-1800</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Graham</td>
<td>(253) 847-8811</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>East Pierce</td>
<td>(253) 862-8300</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Pierce 23</td>
<td>(360) 569-2752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Crystal Mountain</td>
<td>(360) 663-2634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Greenwater</td>
<td>(360) 663-2522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Anderson Island</td>
<td>(253) 884-4040</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix “C”

Gate Submittal Requirements

Instructions
Provide 4 copies of all documents needed for a complete submittal. Incomplete submittals will not be accepted:

- **Vicinity Map.** A vicinity map must have adequate detail to show how to reach the site. You may hand draw the vicinity map or print one from the internet.

- **Site Plan.** See Appendix “F” for a sample site plan.
  1. Use 11” X 17” sheet size. This size is preferred but in no case smaller that 8.5” X 11” or no larger than 22” X 34”.
  2. Name, address, phone number of parcel owner.
  3. Parcel number
  4. Name and phone number of local Fire District.
  5. Draw to scale (1”=20’), show north arrow, scale of drawing, right-of-way, future right-of-way, property lines, roads, edges of paving, driveway, islands, buildings, easements, 2-foot topographical contours. If parcel size prohibits the use of 1′=20’ a smaller scale can be used for the parcel site plan then provide a blow up of the gate area using 1″=20’ scale.
  6. Show length dimension from gate to County right-of-way, future right-of-way or edge of access easement.
  7. Show length dimension from gate to safety/exit loops. Show size dimensions of safety/exit loops.
  8. Show the location of the gate operator and key pad.
  9. Show the gate in both the fully open and closed position.

- **Details.** Show appropriate details of the gatepost, including hinge points, track attachments, latches and other accessory components. For gates more than 6 feet in height, provide a detail of the gatepost footing per the engineered calculations.

- **Roadway Cross-Section/Gate Elevation.** Use the provided form (Appendix “E”) for the cross-section and gate elevation information. Fill in the blanks for clear width, gate height, support post height for either single or double panel gate and material used gate post and panel(s). Circle the type of rapid entry system used; padlock, key box or key switch.

- **Standard Notes.** Include a copy of the standard notes from Appendix “D”
Appendix “C” continued

- **Catalog “Cut Sheets”**. Provide copies of manufacturer’s “cut sheets” for rapid-entry devices, exit and safety loops, loop detector and gate operator components. Cut sheets can be obtained by going online to the manufacturer or company’s internet site you purchase the equipment from. Find the model you are using and print page(s). If multiple items appear on page, circle the item you intend to use.

- **Structural Details**. Gates or supports that exceed 6 feet in height require site-specific structural details and calculations stamped by a Professional Engineer licensed by the State of Washington.
Appendix “D”

Standard Notes for Gates

All gates:

1. The property owner is responsible for maintaining the rapid entry devices in an operable condition.
2. Prior to requesting a Final Inspection from the Development Engineering Section the applicant shall submit a copy of the completed Gate Operation Test form.
3. All pivoting gates shall have a minimum of six inches of clearance between the bottom of gate and the traveled surface, through its entire operating arc.

Electrically operated gates:

4. The gate lock shall default to the unlocked position in the event of a loss of electrical power.
5. All gates shall open on activation of the Knox key switch and shall remain open until manually reset.
6. The safety loop detector circuit shall prevent the gates from closing on a vehicle in its path. An exit loop detector circuit or emergency vehicle strobe detector receiver shall automatically open the gate upon emergency vehicle approach to the exit gate from inside the complex.
7. Electrically operated gates require a permit for the installation of line and low voltage devices. Contact the appropriate permitting agency (state or utility company) for required permits. Pierce County does not issue electrical permits.
8. Prior to requesting a Final Inspection from the Development Engineering Section the applicant must obtain an approval from the electrical inspector and a copy of the electrical permit must be provided to the Development Engineering Section.
Appendix "E"

Gate Information Form:
cross section/elevation, Knox device, gate material and gate dimensions

1. Circle one of the following: single panel  double panel  slide gate
2. Circle one of the following: padlock  key box  key switch
3. Gate clear width is
4. Gate height is
5. Gate support post height is
6. Material used for gate post & panel