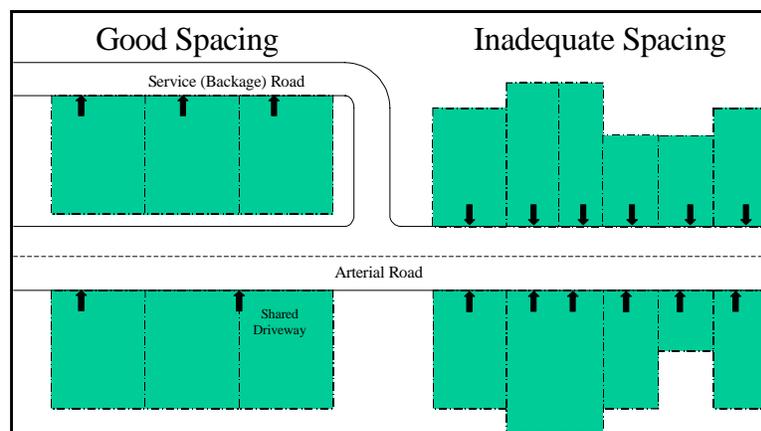


Driveway Spacing

Maintaining an adequate spacing between commercial driveways is one of the most critical aspects of access management.

Why is driveway spacing important?

Motorists turn left and right into and out of driveways when permitted. Traffic turning into and out of driveways moves more slowly than through traffic. This speed difference produces conflicts that may lead to broadside and rear-end collisions between vehicles. Traffic safety research commissioned by the Minnesota Department of Transportation shows that roadways with a large number of closely spaced driveways are *always* less safe than similar roads where driveway access is more limited. For example, an urban route with 100 feet between driveways should experience roughly twice as many accidents as a route with similar turning and through volumes with 250 feet between drives.



Good spacing is achieved with driveway spacing requirements, shared driveways, limits on the number of driveways per lot, and deep lots accessed by service roads. Deep lots also allow space for a buffer between developments and the arterial and off-street parking.

What's a reasonable distance between commercial driveways in urban/suburban areas?

Spacing requirements may be based, among other factors, on posted speed limits, the classification of the roadway, or the amount of traffic generated by a development. Spacing requirements should reflect a balance between traffic and engineering conditions and needs, local development objectives, and existing land-use characteristics (such as lot sizes, land-use type, and frontage requirements).

There are no hard and fast guidelines for driveway spacing, and spacing requirements vary considerably from place to place. However, the table below is used by two local governments in Florida and Ohio and is indicative of good practice. As the posted speed limit rises, the recommended spacing between driveways increases and the number of driveways per mile or block falls to accommodate the increased spacing.

Posted Speed on Arterial Street (mph)	Centerline to Centerline Driveway Spacing (feet)	Approx. Number of Driveways per 500-foot Block Face
20	85	About 6
25	105	5
30	125	4
35	150	3
40	185	3
45	230	2
50	275	Fewer than 2

Source: City of Tallahassee, Florida, and OKI Regional Government, Cincinnati, Ohio.

These guidelines are based on the minimum distance needed to reduce collision potential due to overlapping right turns. Since urban and suburban arterials typically are designed to operate at 35 to 45 miles per hour, the desirable minimum driveway spacing will be approximately 150 to 230 feet, allowing for only 2 to 3 driveways per block face. When this range of spacing is not achieved, the result will be a higher traffic accident rate.

What about in rural areas?

In rural areas, the posted speed is usually at or above 55 miles per hour. The higher speeds mean that driveway spacing in rural areas must be longer to provide for a safe driving environment. On state highways, spacing is also longer because the routes are primarily designed to carry through traffic rather than to serve as property access routes. Most states use a hierarchy to apply a driveway spacing standard. The more important a route is to through traffic and commerce, the longer the spacing between driveways. The following table shows Kansas's standards for its highway system.

State Highway Route Type	Minimum Spacing between Driveways (feet)	Approx. Number of Driveways per Mile
Major arterial (National Highway System)	2,640	2
Other major arterial	1,320	4
Minor arterial	660	8
Other (collector, etc.)	500	10

Source: Kansas Department of Transportation.

On county roads, the spacing standard should also depend on the nature of the road (e.g., how important the road is to through traffic). Even the lowest functional levels require driveway spacing standards for traffic safety, as shown in the following table from a county in Wisconsin.

County Road Route Type	Minimum Spacing between Driveways (feet)	Number of Driveways per Mile
Minor arterials	600	9
Collectors	300	18
Local traffic service	75	70

Source: Waushara County, Wisconsin.