

**POWESHIEK COUNTY ACCESS POLICY  
FOR  
SUBDIVISION, DRIVEWAY, AND FIELD ACCESS**

The purpose of this policy is to establish Poweshiek County's rules for control of access to secondary roads throughout the County. This policy is being developed to formalize Poweshiek County's requirements for the location and establishment of driveways, field entrances and subdivision streets requested by County property owners. It is designed to assure that adequate standards are maintained to assure safe highway access for persons entering upon secondary roads while providing safe highway use for traffic already upon the highway.

A disproportionate number of accidents occur at intersections. Each driveway or field entrance is in essence an intersection. A lack of proper sight distance at an intersection or driveway does not allow time for either the motorist entering the highway or the motorist already on the highway to react to avoid a collision. A driveway that is too narrow or that has an excessive slope impedes the ability of a motorist to enter the highway and lengthens the time the vehicle is not in its proper lane. It is for reasons like this that the policy is developed; that is to establish and define adequate and safe sight distance for entrances to secondary roads and assure uniform construction standards.

**GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:**

Landowners will be allowed to have a driveway to access the Poweshiek County secondary road system with some limitations. Approval of a driveway does not constitute approval for a change in zoning or use of the land, nor does approval of a zoning change constitute approval of a driveway. Driveways may be denied for the following reasons:

1. Inadequate sight distance (specified below)
2. Excessive slope to or from the road (specified below)
3. Insufficient separation between other driveways (specified below)
4. Unreasonable cost to place and maintain

Poweshiek County installs and improves all driveways and charges a fee to the landowner. All landowners or their agents, tenants, or designees who desire additional field entrances or driveways are required to obtain a permit for installation of the driveway from the County Engineer's Office prior to installation. It shall be the responsibility of the applicant to obtain the consent of all landowners for the driveway request. Under some circumstances Poweshiek County may allow the landowner to install the driveway themselves, but under the requirements of the Code of Iowa, Section 319.14, all persons desiring to do work within right of way under the jurisdiction of Poweshiek County must obtain a permit before beginning any work. Permits are available, and the cost to the applicant is the same as if the work were performed by Poweshiek County. Permits shall expire six months from issuance date. Work

performed prior to issuance of a permit will be removed at the landowner's expense.

After the applicant fills out the required information for obtaining a permit, the applicant will be asked to place a flag or other marker at the place at which the driveway is requested. The applicant then shall make an appointment with the Maintenance Superintendent by calling the office at (641) 623-5435 during normal business hours to review the site. The County Maintenance Superintendent will review the site for safety considerations and to size the required drainage structure, if necessary. Following staff review and approval by the Poweshiek County Board of Supervisors, an approved permit will be sent to the applicant if the driveway and sight distance meet County standards. If the permit is denied, the Superintendent will contact the applicant to notify them of denial and to discuss alternative sites.

**DRAINAGE STRUCTURES:**

All culverts will be supplied by Poweshiek County. For accesses requiring culverts, corrugated metal pipe will be utilized. Plastic pipe may be used if corrosive conditions exist that would decrease the expected life of a metal pipe. The minimum size of pipe will be 18" in diameter.

New driveways on paved roads are required to have aprons and safety bars at the end of their culverts. New driveways on rock or dirt roads are not required to have aprons. The aprons allow the culverts to blend with the entrance slopes better than a protruding culvert end.

**SIGHT DISTANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

All new driveways, field or business entrances, and subdivision street intersections must meet the following specifications for sight distance and constructions standards. Minimum Sight Distance Requirements:

| Road Speed Limit | Single Lot Access | Minor Subdivision Road | Major Subdivision Road | Commercial Business Drive/Road |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 25 mph           | 150 feet          | 250 feet               | 325 feet               | 325 feet                       |
| 30 mph           | 200 feet          | 325 feet               | 400 feet               | 400 feet                       |
| 35 mph           | 250 feet          | 400 feet               | 475 feet               | 475 feet                       |
| 40 mph           | 325 feet          | 475 feet               | 550 feet               | 550 feet                       |
| 45 mph           | 400 feet          | 550 feet               | 650 feet               | 650 feet                       |
| 50 mph           | 475 feet          | 650 feet               | 725 feet               | 725 feet                       |
| 55 mph           | 550 feet          | 725 feet               | 850 feet               | 850 feet                       |

For the majority of driveways this means the sight distance on rock roads is 475 feet and on paved roads is 550 feet. The speed limit is based on the posted speed limit established by the Poweshiek County Board of Supervisors or, if no speed limit is posted, by the Code of Iowa, Section 321.285. Driveways and roads will not be approved unless they meet the minimum sight distance requirements of this section.

Poweshiek County reserves the right to make exceptions to the sight distance requirements at the discretion of the County Engineer where the exercise of sound and reasonable engineering judgment indicates that literal enforcement of the policy is not practical or in the best interests of the public. Public safety will not be compromised in such circumstances.

## **MINIMUM DISTANCE BETWEEN DRIVEWAYS AND INTERSECTIONS**

The following minimum distances will be required between driveways and field entrances:

With the exception of a shared driveway to separate properties, driveways shall not be placed closer than 100 feet apart from centerline of driveway to centerline of driveway to allow for adequate space to place entrance culverts and allow for drainage of the road surface. New driveways located directly across the road from existing drives are exempt from this. Deep ditches along paved roads may require additional driveway separation. Final driveway separation distances will be determined during a review of the permit application by the County Engineer or the Engineer's designated representative.

Driveways will not be placed within an intersection, except for a T intersection. Driveways in T intersections must meet all criteria for sight distance, slope and other requirements stated in this policy.

Subdivision lots served by an access road or street that is a platted part of the subdivision will not be allowed driveways that bypass the use of the subdivision street and allow the lot to directly exit onto the existing County road adjacent to the subdivision. Lots abutting and served by platted subdivision streets or roads must use those streets or roads for driveway access. This prohibition of the use of adjacent County roads is desirable as it reduces the number of possible collision conflicts in an area of increased traffic.

Poweshiek County reserves the right to make exceptions to these requirements at the discretion of County Engineer where the exercise of sound and reasonable engineering judgment indicates that literal enforcement of the policy is not practical or in the best interests of the public. Public safety will not be compromised in such circumstances.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS:**

Construction of new or widening of existing driveways, field or business entrances, and subdivision intersections will be according to the requirements shown below:

1. A person wishing to create a new driveway or modify an existing one will make an application. The application may either be emailed via [www.poweshiekcounty.org/secondaryrd1.htm](http://www.poweshiekcounty.org/secondaryrd1.htm) or sent by regular mail to the County Engineer's Office at:  
Poweshiek County Engineer's Office  
102 South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
PO Box 306  
Monetezuma, IA 50171

2. After the Entrance Permit application is made, the Poweshiek County Secondary Road Department will investigate the location and make a report as to the size and length of culvert required, if any, and any unfavorable safety aspects of the location. Poweshiek County will notify the applicant and/or property owner of the results of the report.
3. The permit will be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors for approval or denial.
4. After approval by the Board of supervisors and payment by the applicant, the Poweshiek County Secondary Road Department will proceed to construct the entrance in accordance with the minimum requirements. County residents with approved permits may pay for the driveway either at the office or to the Maintenance Superintendent. Payment will be by check or money order made to "Poweshiek County". Cash is not acceptable.
5. After the driveway is installed, Poweshiek County will accept all future maintenance on the driveway. For this reason all culverts must be new.
6. Driveways are to be constructed with proper side slopes. Driveways along paved road sections are to be constructed with 10:1 slopes on dry fills. If a culvert is necessary there shall be 8:1 side slopes above the top of the culvert, which shall taper to 6:1 from the top of the culvert down to the flowline. Aprons and safety bars will be installed on the end of the pipe. Driveways along rock or dirt road sections are to be placed at a 3:1 entrance slope. If the applicant desires aprons with the appropriate slope they may be installed at the applicant's expense, but they are not required. The flatter slopes along paved road sections are mandated to enhance highway safety in areas of higher speeds and volumes of traffic. Widening of an existing driveway that does not have adequate slopes will require correction of the slope on both sides of the driveway, and for paved roads the addition of aprons and safety bars, at the applicants expense.
7. The minimum top width for a driveway or field entrance will be 20 feet, and maximum width will be 40 feet. Driveways that are shared between adjacent parcels with different owners may be a total of 60 feet wide. The minimum width may be reduced if it is anticipated that the driveway will be used exclusively by pedestrians. The top width for subdivision streets will meet the requirements of the subdivision ordinance based on the type of road section selected by the developer.
8. The maximum slope to or from the road will be 10%. The driveway will not alter the crown of the road shoulder. Poweshiek County will not fill dirt beyond the right-of-way line to help achieve the 10% slope, but may cut dirt beyond that line if the dirt is given and used to build the driveway.
9. The entrance shall be shaped with a crown and must not allow water from the property to drain onto the roadway. This may require small ditches on both sides of the entrance driveway for a short distance back onto the property, to control the water. If the road is lower than the property being accessed there will be a low spot in the driveway to prevent water from running out on to the road
10. Entrances are not required to be surfaced with crushed rock, but may be if the

property owner desires. The applicant will be responsible for placement of rock from shoulder edge to the right of way line. Poweshiek County will provide and maintain rock surfaces only as far as the shoulder width of the road and will not otherwise provide rock for driveways, including bus turnarounds. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCE will rock be removed from County roads.

11. If the landowner desires to pave the driveway surface, the work can only be undertaken by permit from the Engineer's Office. There are specific design considerations in attaching paved entrances to a paved road that must be approved by the County Engineer. Work performed prior to issuance of a permit may result in removal at the expense of the landowner. Poweshiek County assumes no responsibility for the paved surface if damaged by maintenance.

### **COST OF DRIVEWAYS:**

The cost for driveways will be rounded up or down to the nearest \$10 and will follow the schedule listed below. These costs assume a 66 feet right-of-way and a 4 feet deep ditch. An additional charge may be incurred if the ditch is significantly deeper or if the right-of-way is significantly wider. Driveway width is the width that vehicles can travel on (the width of the top surface). Poweshiek County will charge for culverts in the right-of-way at cost.

1. A new dryfill driveway (no culvert required) on a rock or dirt road will cost \$500 and will have a top width of 26 feet or less. If a wider driveway is desired the cost will be established by the Poweshiek County Engineer or designee.
2. A new driveway on a rock or dirt road with a culvert will cost \$500 plus the current cost of the pipe required. The minimum size of culvert is 18 inches in diameter and 32 feet long. For information only, in 2007 this culvert cost about \$320. Driveways requiring a larger diameter or more length will be subject to a higher fee set by the Poweshiek County Engineer or designee.
3. The cost to widen a dryfill driveway on a rock or dirt road will be \$25 per foot with a minimum charge of \$200.
4. The cost to widen a driveway on a rock or dirt road with a culvert will be \$25 per foot with a minimum charge of \$200 plus the current cost of the pipe.
5. A new dryfill driveway (no culvert required) on a paved road will cost \$750 and will have a top width of 26 feet or less. If a wider driveway is desired the cost will be established by the Poweshiek County Engineer or designee.
6. A new driveway on a paved road with a culvert will cost \$750 plus the current cost of the pipe required. The minimum size of culvert is 18 inches in diameter and 32 feet long with aprons and safety bars. For information only, in 2007 this culvert cost about \$320 and the aprons and safety bars cost about \$775.
7. The cost to widen a dryfill driveway on a paved road will be \$35 per foot with a minimum charge of \$200.
8. The cost to widen a driveway on a paved road with a culvert will be \$35 per foot with a minimum charge of \$200 plus the current cost of the pipe. The cost will be increased if slopes need to be corrected and/or if safety bars and aprons are not already present.

## **COUNTY POLICY FOR MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING DRIVEWAYS**

Poweshiek County will maintain existing driveways according to the following policy:

1. The County will repair driveways as needed to maintain field and home access. The property owner, tenant, or agent for the property owner will make a request for maintenance to the County Engineer's Office. The County will repair the driveway, replace the culvert, if necessary, and rebuild the driveway to meet minimum width requirements. The County will replace the driveway in equal width to the driveway in place.
2. Upon completing repairs to the driveway, the County will replace rock surfacing on the driveway if rock surfacing was present. Poweshiek County will **NOT** replace paved surfaces. If the driveway was paved they will surface the affected area with rock. Repairs to paved surfaces, if necessary, will be done by the landowner.
3. If culvert replacement is necessary, the length of the driveway will be altered to fall between 20 feet and 40 feet (60 feet for shared driveways), as listed above.
4. The County will not provide rock to driveways. If the resident or owner drags rock from within the County right of way, the County maintainer operator will remove the rock from the drive and pull it back within the right of way.

### **REPEALER:**

All ordinances and resolutions, or parts thereof, in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

### **SEVERABILITY:**

If any section, provision, or part of this policy shall be adjudged invalid or unconstitutional, such adjudication shall not affect the validity of the policy as a whole or any section, provision, or part thereof not adjudged invalid or unconstitutional. This access policy for subdivisions, driveways and field entrances is passed and approved by the Poweshiek County Board of Supervisors.

APPROVED on 2/21/08