



Gates - Single Family Residence Permitting, Design & Inspection Guide

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.

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](#)
- [Manual on Design Guidelines and Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction in Pierce County](#) as published by the County Engineer
- [Title 17C - Construction and Infrastructure Regulations-Building and Fire Codes](#) (Section 17C.60).

Do I Need a Gate Permit?

A gate permit is required to install the gate and its related components if constructed on or after January 1, 1992 across a residential driveway.

A site development permit is a permit to perform access or driveway and other associated site development work; it is not a permit to construct a gate.

If you have questions, please go to [Ask the Development Center](#) and complete the form.

If you need to submit for a site development permit, please go to PALS Online, Application Creation Page at <https://palsonline.co.pierce.wa.us/palsonline/#/permitApplication>

Application Fee

Correct fees paid in accordance with the current fee schedule as adopted by County Council. See Pals Web Page at <https://www.co.pierce.wa.us/DocumentCenter/View/58049>, or [County Code, Title 2, Chapter 2.05 Planning and Land Services Fees](#).

Parameters of the Design Guide

Several guidelines were used in the writing of this document that the reader should be aware of 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 on to 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 starting:

A gate design takes into consideration characteristics that will serve the interest of multiple users: the traveling public, the occupants served by the gate, and emergency vehicles. Some items 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, including emergency vehicles, to pass through the gate without difficulty.

Gate Setbacks

Gates serving one single family residence shall be set back from the road right-of-way and/or easement a minimum of **ten feet from arterials and zero feet from all other roads**. Gates are exempt from building setback requirements to property lines.

Parcels adjacent to a public road right-of-way may be subject to setbacks measured from a **future right-of-way** (FROW). Contact the Development Engineering Technical support staff at 253-798-3739, 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 five.

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, whichever is the narrowest measurement when the gate is in the open position. Gates must be designed such that emergency vehicles can access the gate with a minimum 20-foot inside radius and 45-foot outside radius. 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 **eighteen 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 **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 upon activation of the switch, and the 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 can 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 at "[About My Property](#)" to find your local fire district. [Appendix "B"](#) has a list of fire districts and contact telephone numbers.

You can also call 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. Submit the approved permit electronically to Inspection at PALSDevEngInsp@co.pierce.wa.us

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 feet 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 manufacturer. An exit loop may 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 and *Appendix "A"* for definitions.

How to Apply for a Permit

To apply for a gate permit, go to [Gates on the PALS Website](#). All documents must be in PDF format.

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 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. Submit the GOT test form electronically to Inspection at PALSDevEngInsp@co.pierce.wa.us

When to Call for Inspection

- A.** Gates or supports **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 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. Submit the approved permit electronically to Inspection at PALSDevEngInsp@co.pierce.wa.us
 2. A Development Engineering final inspection can be scheduled when the following items have been completed:
 - The gate and its related components have been completely installed and the gate is operational.
 - The local fire district inspection is completed and Gate Operation Test form has been e-mailed to Development inspection.
 - A copy of the approved electrical permit has been e-mailed to Development Engineering Inspection.

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

1. The first inspection for gates over 6 feet 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. (A.)

Requesting Development Engineering Inspections

Telephone requests 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.

Internet requests are made through the [PALS Dashboard](#). You must be a registered user of the site to schedule or cancel inspections.

Development Engineering Inspection Results

Development Engineering inspection results can be seen on line through the [PALS Dashboard](#). 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 click on **Parcel & Property Information** located on the left-hand column. On the next page under "Parcel Research Tools" 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 E-mail to Development Engineering Inspection.

If you have inspection questions or a Gate Operational Test Form, you can e-mail the Development Engineering Inspection section using PALSDevEngInsp@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 up to six 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's 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 the manufacture's or vender's web sites.

Appendix "B"

Fire District Contacts

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

Appendix "C"

Gate Submittal Requirements

Instructions

To apply for a gate permit, go to <http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/index.aspx?NID=4640>. All documents must be in PDF format. Submit only one document containing site plan and all supporting documents.

- **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 than 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 an enlargement 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 positions.
- **Details.** Show appropriate details of the gatepost, including hinge points, track attachments, latches, and other accessory components. For gates that are over 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"](#).
- **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 on line to the manufacturer's 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 a page, circle the item you intend to use.

- **Structural Details.** Gates or supports exceeding 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:

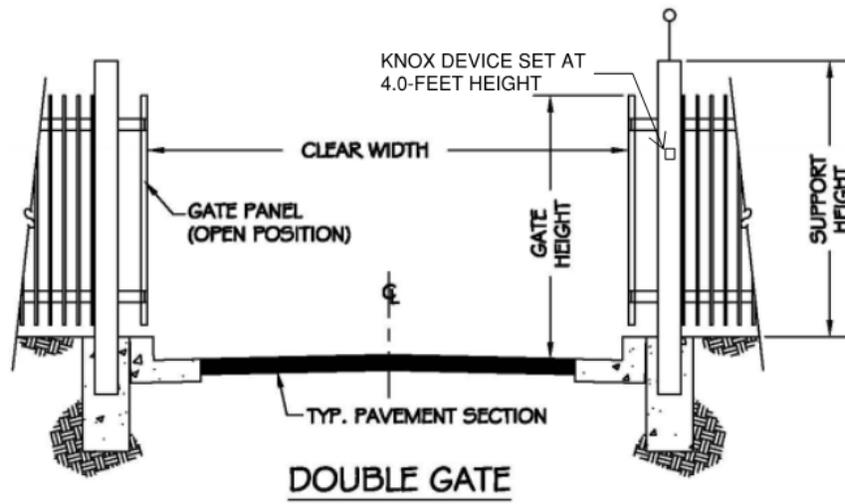
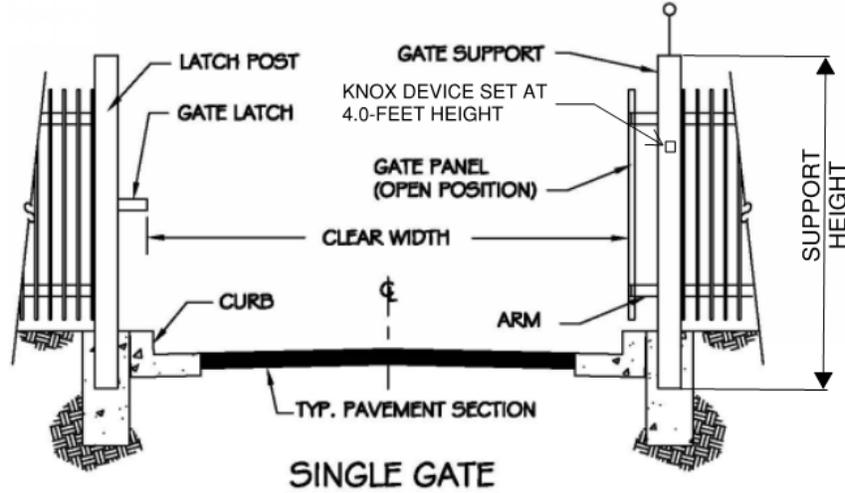
1. The property owner is responsible for maintaining the rapid entry devices in an operable condition.
2. Prior to requesting a final inspection from the Development Engineering Section, the applicant shall submit a copy of the completed Gate Operation Test form.
3. All pivoting gates shall have a minimum of six inches of clearance between the bottom of gate and the traveled surface, through the 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 approved electrical permit must be e-mailed to the Development Engineering Section.

Appendix "E"

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



1. Circle single gate or double panel gate drawing above.
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 _____

Appendix "F"

Sample Site Plan

