

Fire Department Access During Construction

2025 California Fire Code §§501.4 and 3307 - Construction and demolition sites

Purpose. Fire department access and water supply must be established early enough to support emergency operations throughout construction or demolition. Temporary conditions cannot block or eliminate required emergency access.

1. Access Before and During Construction

Required fire apparatus access roads and water supplies must be installed and made serviceable before and during construction, unless an approved alternative method of protection is provided. Construction sequencing should treat fire access as an active life-safety feature, not a final-site item.

Code reference: 2025 CFC §501.4

2. Vehicle Access to the Site

- Approved firefighting vehicle access must be provided to all construction and demolition sites.
- Temporary or permanent access roads must support fire apparatus loading in all weather conditions.
- Access must be maintained until the permanent fire apparatus access roads are available.
- Construction materials, dumpsters, fencing, cranes, parked vehicles, excavations and soil piles may not block the required route.

Code reference: 2025 CFC §3307.1

3. Access to Fire Department Connections

Construction-site vehicle access must extend to within 100 feet of temporary or permanent fire department connections. FDCs must remain visible, identifiable and unobstructed as the building work progresses.

Code reference: 2025 CFC §3307.1 and §912

4. Temporary / Permanent Roads

- The road surface must remain capable of carrying fire apparatus under expected weather and construction-site conditions.
- Required width, vertical clearance, turning areas and grades must be maintained.
- Where temporary access differs from the final approved route, the temporary route should be shown in the approved construction fire-safety/site plan.
- Temporary street signs or other approved identification must be installed as required once roads are passable.

Code reference: 2025 CFC §§501.3-501.4, 503 and 3307

5. Building Height and Stairway Access

When building construction exceeds 40 feet above the lowest level of fire department vehicle access, a temporary or permanent stairway is required under the construction chapter. The stairway must progress with construction so firefighters have usable vertical access as required by the code.

Code reference: 2025 CFC §3307.1.2

6. Construction Water Supply and Fire Protection

- Required construction water supply must be available when required by Chapter 33 and the approved construction fire-safety plan.
- Hydrants must remain visible and unobstructed.
- Standpipes must be extended and placed in service as construction reaches the levels specified by the code.
- Fire extinguishers must be provided at required locations on construction floors and in sheds/storage areas.
- Fire protection systems and temporary protective measures must not be disabled without following approved impairment procedures.

Code reference: 2025 CFC Chapter 33 §§3306-3307; CFC §901.7

7. Site Fire Safety and Housekeeping

- Maintain required site fire-safety inspections and documentation.
- Control combustible waste and remove excessive accumulations.
- Protect temporary heating, hot work and fuel storage operations.
- Maintain clear emergency access around the building and between construction areas.
- Keep key boxes or approved emergency-entry arrangements operational where required.

Code reference: 2025 CFC Chapter 33 and Chapter 35

8. Construction Access Checklist

- All-weather apparatus route established.
- Required width/height/turning areas maintained.
- Access reaches within 100 feet of FDCs.
- Hydrants and FDCs visible and unobstructed.
- Temporary/permanent stairs provided when building height trigger is reached.
- Water supply and standpipes available as required.
- Construction fencing/gates provide approved emergency access.
- Addresses/site identification visible.
- No dumpsters/materials/equipment in required access route.

Primary References

- 2025 California Fire Code §501.4 - Timing of installation
- 2025 California Fire Code Chapter 33 - Fire Safety During Construction and Demolition, including §3307
- 2025 California Fire Code §§503, 506, 507, 912 and Chapter 35 as applicable

This handout is an informational summary. It does not replace the adopted code, approved plans, permit conditions, State licensing requirements, or determinations of the fire code official. Project-specific requirements may vary.