

Section 11: Vehicle access

Introduction

11.1 For the purposes of this Approved Document, vehicle access to the exterior of a building is needed to enable high reach appliances, such as turntable ladders and hydraulic platforms, to be used and to enable pumping appliances to supply water and equipment for firefighting, search and rescue activities.

Vehicle access routes and hard-standings should meet the criteria described in paragraph 11.4 where they are to be used by fire and rescue service vehicles.

Note: Requirements cannot be made under the Building Regulations for work to be done outside the site of the works shown on the deposited plans, building notice or initial notice. In this connection it may not always be reasonable to upgrade an existing route across a site to a small building such as a single dwellinghouse. The options in such a case, from doing no work to upgrading certain features of the route, e.g. a sharp bend, should be considered by the Building Control Body in consultation with the fire and rescue service.

11.2 There should be vehicle access for a pump appliance to within 45m of all points within the dwellinghouse.

11.3 Every elevation to which vehicle access is provided in accordance with paragraph 11.2 should have a suitable door(s), not less than 750mm wide, giving access to the interior of the building.

Design of access routes and hard-standings

11.4 A vehicle access route may be a road or other route which, including any inspection covers and the like, meets the standards in Table 8 and paragraph 11.5.

11.5 Turning facilities should be provided in any dead end access route that is more than 20m long (see Diagram 24). This can be by a hammerhead or turning circle, designed on the basis of Table 8.

Table 8 Typical fire and rescue service vehicle access route specification

Appliance type	Minimum width of road between kerbs (m)	Minimum width of gateways (m)	Minimum turning circle between kerbs (m)	Minimum turning circle between walls (m)	Minimum clearance height (m)	Minimum carrying capacity (tonnes)
Pump	3.7	3.1	16.8	19.2	3.7	12.5
High reach	3.7	3.1	26.0	29.0	4.0	17.0

Notes:

1. Fire appliances are not standardised. Some fire and rescue services have appliances of greater weight or different size. In consultation with the Fire and Rescue Authority, the Building Control Body may adopt other dimensions in such circumstances.
2. Because the weight of high reach appliances is distributed over a number of axles, it is considered that their infrequent use of a carriageway or route designed to 12.5 tonnes should not cause damage. It would therefore be reasonable to design the roadbase to 12.5 tonnes, although structures such as bridges should have the full 17 tonnes capacity.

Diagram 24 Turning facilities

See para 11.5

Fire and rescue service vehicles should not have to reverse more than 20m from the end of an access road

