



A Tradition of Stewardship  
A Commitment to Service

Planning, Building & Environmental Services  
1195 Third Street, Suite 210  
Napa, CA 94559  
www.countyofnapa.org

**Brian Bordona**  
Interim Director

## 2023 Napa County Road and Street Standards FAQ

1. What activities/projects can I do on my property that would require compliance with the most recent Napa County Road and Street Standards (NCRSS)?
  - A. There are eight (8) activities that require that the current and/or proposed access to the property comply with the most recent NCRSS:
    - i. Application for a building permit for new construction, not relating to an existing structure.
    - ii. Application for a Use Permit or any modification thereto resulting in an increase in intensity, as defined in Section 4 of the NCRSS and/or proposing an affected activity described in subsections (a), (d), and (e) of Section 2 of the NCRSS, and herein as subsection (i.), (iii.) and (iv.)
    - iii. Change of use and/or occupancy of an existing structure resulting in a higher hazard, based on life and fire risk as defined in the California Fire Code.
    - iv. Road construction, including construction of a new road that does not currently exist, or extension of an existing road, construction or extension of an existing road that was not legally established, or the construction of a new parking lot.
    - v. New subdivisions created by Parcel Map or Final Map,
    - vi. Conditional certificates of compliance.
    - vii. Left turn lane warrant and/or other public road improvement required by the Director of Public Works.
    - viii. Application for an Administrative Permit proposing an affected activity described in subsection (a), (d) and (e) of Section 2 of the NCRSS, and herein as subsection (i.), (iii.), (iv.).
2. What is the definition of “Building” in the NCRSS?
  - A. Any structure used or intended for supporting or sheltering any use or occupancy except utility and miscellaneous Group U structures.
3. What is the definition of “New Construction” in the NCRSS?

- A. Construction of a new structure not relating to an existing structure. New structures relating to an existing structure include but are not limited to: accessory utility and miscellaneous Group U buildings, and guest cottages.
4. One of the activities that require compliance with the NCRSS listed above mentions obtaining a building permit for new construction, not relating to an existing structure so does that mean I can't build any new structures on my property without requiring that my access comply with the latest NCRSS?
- A. No. The application for a building permit for the new construction of a structure that is related to an existing structure such as a guest cottage, accessory utility structure, or other miscellaneous Group U buildings would not alone trigger the application of the NCRSS.
5. What is a Guest Cottage?
- A. A guest cottage as defined in Napa County Code Chapter 18.08.300, means a structure not containing kitchen facilities accessory to a single-family residence and designed and used primarily for sleeping accommodations by members of the same family which occupy the residence or their nonpaying guests. A guest cottage may include bar facilities including a bar sink with no dimension larger than twelve inches and a refrigerator not exceeding six cubic feet in capacity. Pursuant to Napa County Code Chapter 18.104.080, a guest cottage living area shall not exceed 1,000 square feet.
6. What if I want to construct an ADU (aka 2nd Dwelling Unit) on my property?
- A. Yes, because a second dwelling unit is considered a standalone separate living structure complete with its own cooking and sleeping facilities, it is considered new construction not related to an existing structure and would require the property owner to provide access that complies with the current NCRSS.
7. What is an increase in intensity?
- A. An increase in intensity, as it relates to the NCRSS, is an increase in the number of persons to a project site or daily traffic volume to a project site. For illustrative purposes, one additional person and/or one additional vehicle trip to the project site is considered an increase in intensity.
8. Will an Administrative Use Permit trigger application of the NCRSS?
- A. The NCRSS is triggered if the Administrative Use Permit results in an increase the intensity and/or is proposing an affected activity described in subsections (a), (d), and (e) of Section 2 of the NCRSS, or as described below:

- i. Application for a building permit for new construction not related to an existing structure.
- ii. A change in use and/or occupancy classification of an existing structure resulting in a higher hazard, based on life and fire risk as defined in the California Fire Code.
- iii. Road construction, including construction of a new road that does not currently exist, or the extension of an existing road, construction or extension of an existing road that was not legally established, or the construction of a new parking lot.

9. What are the Wildfire/Disaster Rebuild provisions for Residential Structures?

A. The reconstruction or repair of a legally constructed residential building may find relief from the NCRSS provided the following conditions are met:

- i. The replacement structure does not increase the total legal square footage of the structure that previously existed.
- ii. The replacement structure does not change the use of the building that had existed previously; and
- iii. The Fire Marshal determines that:
  - a. The access was not a contributing factor in delaying or prohibiting emergency responders from accessing the original structure or for safe evacuation during the disaster; and
  - b. The access provides reasonable ingress, egress, and capacity for evacuation and emergency response during future emergencies.

10. What are the Wildfire/Disaster Rebuild provisions for Commercial or Industrial Structures?

A. The reconstruction or repair of a legally constructed commercial or industrial building may find relief from the NCRSS provided the following conditions are met:

- i. The replacement structure does not increase the total legal square footage of the structure that previously existed;
- ii. The replacement structure does not increase in intensity from what was legally entitled before the disaster.
- iii. The replacement structure does not change the use of the building that had existed previously; and
- iv. The Fire Marshal determines that:
  - a. The access was not a contributing factor in delaying or prohibiting emergency responders from accessing the original structure or for safe evacuation during the disaster; and

- b. The access provides reasonable ingress, egress, and capacity for evacuation and emergency response during future emergencies.
- 11. If multiple structures were damaged or destroyed in a disaster can the building areas be combined or separated in a rebuild?
  - A. No, each building is evaluated independent of one another.
- 12. What projects are exempt from the NCRSS?
  - A. Building construction on a parcel that was formed from a parcel map or tentative map approved prior to January 1, 1991, to the extent that conditions relating to the perimeter and access to the building were imposed by the parcel map or final tentative map. The project would be required to meet the conditions of approval relating to the perimeter and access imposed by the parcel map or final tentative map.
- 13. How do Lot Line Adjustments (LLA) affect the 1991 Parcel Map/Tentative Map Exemption?
  - A. The exemption would still be applicable to the parcel(s) formed from by a parcel map or tentative map approved prior to January 1, 1991, to the extent that conditions relating to the perimeter and access to the building were imposed.
- 14. What is Same Overall Practical Effect?
  - A. Same Practical Effect is defined as an exception or alternative with the capability of applying accepted wildland fire suppression strategies and tactics, and provisions for fire fighter safety, including, but not limited to:
    - i. Access for emergency wildland fire equipment;
    - ii. Safe civilian evacuation;
    - iii. Signing that avoids delays in emergency equipment response;
    - iv. Available and accessible water to effectively attack wildfire or defend a structure from wildfire, and;
    - v. Fuel modification sufficient for civilian and fire fighter safety.
- 15. How is Access defined?
  - A. Access is the vehicular route from the nearest publicly maintained Road to Building construction.
- 16. Does access apply to public roads?

- A. Only when a development proposes to construct a public road or at the discretion of the Public Works Director and/or Fire Marshal.

17. What is a Driveway?

- A. A vehicular pathway that serves no more than four (4) Residential Units and any number of non-commercial or non-industrial Utility or Miscellaneous Group U Buildings on each parcel. A Driveway shall not serve commercial or industrial uses at any size or scale.

18. What is a Road?

- A. A public or private vehicular pathway to more than four (4) Residential Units, or to any industrial or commercial occupancy.

19. What is a Dead-end Road?

- A. A road that has only one point of vehicular ingress/egress, including cul-de-sacs and Roads that loop back on themselves.

20. What are the requirements/restrictions on Dead-End Roads?

- A. Dead-End Roads cannot exceed the lengths specified in 14 CCR § 1273.08 which are based on parcel zoning:
  - i. Parcels zoned for less than one acre – 800 feet.
  - ii. Parcels zoned for 1 acre to 4.99 acres – 1,320 feet.
  - iii. Parcels zoned for 5 acres to 19.99 acres – 2,640 feet.
  - iv. Parcels zoned for 20 acres or larger – 5,280 feet.
- B. Each of the above lengths are measured from the edge of the Road surface at the intersection that begins the Road to the end of the Road surface at its farthest point, based on access for building construction. Where a Dead-end Road crosses areas of differing zoned parcel sizes requiring different length limits, the shortest allowable length shall apply. Dead-end road turnaround requirements are specified in 14 CCR § 1273.05:
  - i. Each Dead-end Road shall have a turnaround constructed at its terminus. Where parcels are zoned 5 acres or larger, turnarounds shall be provided at a maximum of 1,320' intervals.

21. What is the maximum allowable length of a driveway?

- A. There is no maximum length restriction for driveways.

22. What is a Strategic Ridgeline?

- A. A Strategic Ridgeline is a ridgeline identified by Napa County, in cooperation with the Fire Authority, that may support fire suppression activities or where the preservation of the ridgeline as undeveloped would reduce fire risk and improve fire protection.

23. What does SRA mean?

- A. State Responsibility Areas (SRA) are recognized by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection as areas where Cal Fire is the primary emergency response agency responsible for fire suppression and prevention.

24. What does LRA mean?

- A. Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) are recognized by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection as areas where the local fire jurisdiction is the primary emergency response agency responsible for fire suppression and prevention. In Napa County Cal Fire is contracted to provide fire suppression and prevention services within the unincorporated areas.

25. What is VHFHSZ?

- A. Fire “hazard” is a measure of how a fire will behave, based on the physical conditions of an area that create a likelihood an area may burn due to a wildfire. The best available science and data is used to evaluate these zones based on factors that include fire history, vegetation, flame length, blowing embers, terrain, weather and the likelihood of buildings igniting. Modeling is utilized to help assess the likelihood of a fire occurring in an area due to the above examples of local conditions, such as fuel (material that can burn), and some areas are then designated as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone on the Cal Fire maps.

26. What are the Building Setbacks in the SRA and VHFHSZ?

- B. All parcels shall provide a minimum thirty (30) foot setback for all Buildings from all property lines and/or the center of a Road.

27. What best practices are required to reduce those setbacks?

- A. Reductions in the minimum setback shall be based upon practical reasons, which may include but are not limited to, parcel dimensions or size, topographic limitations; Development density requirements or other Development patterns that promote low carbon emission outcomes; sensitive habitat; or other site constraints, and shall provide for an alternative method to

reduce Structure-to-Structure ignition by incorporating features such as, but not limited to:

- i. Non-combustible block walls or fences; or
- ii. Non-combustible material extending five (5) feet horizontally from the furthest extent of the Building; or
- iii. Hardscape landscaping; or
- iv. A reduction of exposed windows on the side of the Structure with a less than thirty (30) foot setback; or
- v. The most protective requirements in the California Building Code, California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 2, Chapter 7A, as required by the local jurisdiction. 14 CCR § 1276.01(b)