

Paving Residential Dirt Driveways in the City of South Lake Tahoe

Contact Information

- City of South Lake Tahoe Building Department: (530) 542-6010
- Tahoe Regional Planning Agency: (775) 588-4547

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Code of Ordinances Chapter 25.5.E states "All roads, driveways and parking areas proposed for year-round use shall be paved." Paving dirt driveways in conjunction with properly designed infiltration systems reduce stormwater runoff and soil erosion. Bare soil areas serving as driveways become compacted and don't allow stormwater to infiltrate as it would in undisturbed areas. Stormwater runoff from dirt driveways is filled with excess nutrients, sediment, and other harmful pollutants which flow into our waterways. This degrades streams and reduces the famous clarity of Lake Tahoe.

Paving Options

Contact the Building Department for paving and/or encroachment permit information. Encroachment permits can only be issued to a licensed contractor.

1. The minimum: paving two parking spaces within the property boundary

- The standard paving permit will allow you to pave the minimum amount of off-street parking required by your local jurisdiction. This is usually two off-street parking spaces, approximately 400 square feet.
- A paving permit is not a verification of existing coverage or use. If you want to verify coverage a site assessment is necessary. For more information on land capability/land coverage visit <http://www.trpa.org>.

2. Paving more than the minimum

- This option is appropriate when there is a garage located on the property that needs to be connected to the street, or when there is additional compacted soil that has been legally established as a parking area prior to February 10, 1972 that is still being used.
- It is advisable to complete the site assessment process if paving more than the minimum to avoid potential loss of rights to existing coverage. In some instances a site assessment may be required in order to receive a paving permit. For more information on land capability/land coverage visit <http://www.trpa.org>.
- Larger driveway installations that involve the grading of more than 3 to 7 cubic yards of soil may require a grading permit.

The remaining previously parked on compacted bare soil areas that are not paved shall be blocked off and restored to natural conditions.

Essential Considerations for All New Driveway Installations:

General

- Paving your driveway is a requirement unless your neighborhood is deemed "summer use only" and is never plowed in the winter. You will still be responsible for stabilizing your driveway surface with either organic or inorganic mulch.

Coverage

- It is always advisable to document existing conditions before making any changes to your property to avoid over coverage penalties or loss of rights to existing coverage. Common documentation forms include photographs, site assessments, TRPA stamped plans, etc.
- All acceptable plowable surfaces for driveways count as coverage at this time.
- If your home was built before February 10, 1972, and you have been using a designated non-paved site for parking, you can request that the TRPA or the City of South Lake Tahoe Building Department

verifies the area as land coverage through a land coverage verification which could potentially be used to pave a larger parking area or to construct a future addition.

TRPA's definition of Land Coverage as defined in Chapter 2, Definitions, of TRPA's Code of Ordinances is as follows:

Land Coverage: 1) A man-made structure, improvement or covering, either created before February 10, 1972 or created after February 10, 1972 pursuant to either TRPA Ordinance No. 4, as amended, or other TRPA approval, that prevents normal precipitation from directly reaching the surface of the land underlying the structure, improvement or covering. Such structures, improvements and coverings include but are not limited to roofs, decks, surfaces that are paved with asphalt, concrete or stone, roads, streets, sidewalks, driveways, parking lots, tennis courts, patios; and 2) lands so used before February 10, 1972, for such uses as for the parking of cars and heavy and repeated pedestrian traffic that the soil is compacted so as to prevent substantial infiltration. A structure, improvement or covering shall not be considered as land coverage if it permits at least 75 percent of normal precipitation directly to reach the ground and permits growth of vegetation on the approved species list. Common terms related to land coverage are:

- 1) Hard Coverage--man-made structures as defined above.*
- 2) Soft Coverage--compacted areas without structures as defined above.*

Contractors

- A list of contractors who have attended the most recent BMP Contractors Workshop can be obtained at <http://www.tahoebmp.org>. This is a list of attendees for informative purposes only. The TRPA/TRCD cannot verify the qualifications or licenses of any of the individuals on this list. The status of a contractor's license may be viewed on the California State Licensing Board website, <http://www.cslb.ca.gov>.
- If you hire a paving contractor you should discuss who will be responsible for obtaining applicable permits and ensure that appropriate driveway BMPs are installed at the time of paving.

Runoff Infiltration Requirements

The Tahoe Resource Conservation District provides homeowners assistance with the design of runoff infiltration systems for their driveways and other impervious surfaces. For more information, visit <http://tahoercd.org>.

- Pursuant to subsection 25.5.A of the TRPA Code of Ordinances, all property owners in the Tahoe Basin are required to install infiltration facilities (BMPs) designed to accommodate the volume of runoff from a twenty year/one hour storm, which is approximately one inch of precipitation in an hour.
- Driveways are impervious surfaces producing runoff that must be infiltrated within your property boundaries as required by the TRPA Code of Ordinances.
- Some design considerations include:
 - Grading - designs that direct runoff to a desired location for infiltration.
 - Capture and Conveyance - driveways that drain towards the street must have a capture and conveyance system installed, such as a swale or slotted channel drain, to direct driveway runoff to an appropriately sized infiltration system.
 - Maintenance – systems that are easy to inspect and clean are highly recommended. Removable grates on trench drains are recommended for ease of maintenance.
 - Safety – design a system that will eliminate ponding and subsequent ice patches on your driveway.

Alternative Driveway Materials

- The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency requires a driveway paving material that produces a hard, plowable surface. For information on alternative paving materials that may meet this requirement contact the TRPA (775) 588-4547.