

ROAD CLOSURES



ROADS & TRANSPORTATION

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The authority of the Public Works Agency to close a County roadway is derived from the California Streets and Highways Code Section 942.5 and 942.6. From time to time, there is a need to close roads for a variety of reasons. This could include activities such as construction of roadway improvements, installation of utilities, storm related damage and other activities such as filming and special events. Projects requiring road closures will be required to obtain an encroachment permit and follow the notification and detour plan requirements.

WHAT IS THE COUNTY'S POLICY FOR NON-ESSENTIAL ROAD CLOSURES?

Complete road closures exist where traffic is not allowed to travel through the closed section of road at least every three minutes. Nonessential road closures related to film permits and other non-essential activities will be allowed if the following conditions have been satisfied:

- Applications for complete road closures are to be submitted to the Ventura County Public Works Agency – Roads and Transportation department (VCPWA-RT) a minimum of three weeks prior to the proposed closure date to allow sufficient time for processing and notification to the public. The three weeks is an estimated timeframe for completion of the notification requirements but could be accomplished within one week if the applicant has the resources available for a faster turnaround time.
- VCPWA-RT will establish "Direct Impact" and "Notification" areas for each road closure request. Standardized areas have been established for the road sections that are most frequently closed, but these areas can be modified.
- Affected parties within a "Direct Impact" area must be surveyed and at least 67 percent of the affected parties must agree to the proposed closure. In some cases, 100 percent of the affected parties may be required to agree, especially if no alternative route is available to use as a detour. All occupants of homes and owners of businesses located within the "Direct Impact" area, defined by VCPWA-RT, are to be surveyed by the permit applicant. VCPWA-RT must approve the survey form and contents in advance.

The owners and occupants of each residence and business will be entitled to one vote. Owners and occupants of homes and businesses must be shown the proposed traffic detour route, which has been approved by VCPWA-RT, when requested to vote on the proposed road closure. Complete road closure will only be permitted if at least 67 percent of all the parties eligible to vote are in favor. In addition, all impacted owners and occupants of homes and businesses located within the “Notification” area determined by VCPWA-RT are to be notified of the proposed road closure by the permit applicant using postcards at least one week in advance. Alternatively, applicants may use their own letterhead when mailing written notification of a proposed road closure. VCPWA-RT must approve the postcard or letterhead notification in advance.

Postcard or letterhead notification recipients will be asked to provide VCPWA-RT with any comments or concerns within one week of receipt. If more than 10 percent of the postcard recipients express opposition to the closure, applicants will be asked to contact those in opposition and resolve their concerns prior to issuance of permits or a revised submittal of the application will be required.

- The “Direct Impact” and “Notification” areas contained in VCPWA-RT’s complete policy on road closures are considered guides in determining the specific areas associated with a specific road closure application. The “Direct Impact” areas requiring signatures of property owners will generally be considered a four-block radius. Alternative “Direct Impact” and “Notification” areas may be included on a case-by-case basis as determined by VCPWA-RT based on other factors.
- A traffic detour plan must be prepared by the applicant and submitted to VCPWA-RT for approval prior to the surveying of the owners and occupants of homes and businesses. At a minimum, the plan should comprise a map showing the location of the proposed road closure(s) and identifying alternate routes. The approved detour plan must be attached to the survey consent form so parties voting on the closure can be aware of the detour.
- A Traffic Control Plan (TCP) prepared in accordance with the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CAMUTCD) and certified by a Civil or Traffic Engineer may be required, depending on the site conditions.
- Changeable message signs must be deployed 48 hours prior to the road closure being implemented announcing the times and dates of the closure at pre-designated locations.
- No road closure will typically be permitted during morning and evening peak hours, during times when traffic is entering or leaving a nearby school, or during other times when the road closure would cause excessive disruption. The applicant will be required to arrange and pay for traffic control by the California Highway Patrol at locations identified by VCPWA-RT consistent with the traffic detour plan.

- The applicant will be required to post signs at locations approved by VCPWA-RT notifying drivers of the date, time, and duration of the closure at least three days in advance of the closure once approval has been received from VCPWA-RT. An example of the layout for this sign is provided in VCPWA-RT's policy on road closures.
- The applicant will be responsible for paying the costs associated with VCPWA-RT work involved in processing a complete road closure request. These costs will be in addition to any other required inspection fees associated with the activity requiring the road closure.
- When a proposed road closure would result in significantly longer emergency response times, the applicant will be required to hire an Ambulance and/or Fire Engine to be stationed in the area beyond the closure for emergency response in the area affected by the closure. If no suitable alternate emergency response access route is available to the area blocked by the road closure, the applicant will be required to provide a single emergency access lane with a minimum clear width of 12 feet to a minimum clear height of 13 feet 6 inches within two minutes of notification by the Fire Department.

Written approval of a road closure must also be obtained from the Fire Prevention Bureau of the County Fire Department and the Sheriff's Patrol area representative. Applications for such approval must be accompanied by plans for suggested alternate emergency routes, or for maintaining a single emergency access lane.

- A surety deposit will be required by VCPWA-RT to ensure compliance with the terms of the closure permit and is fully refundable if applicants comply with the approved times and manner of the road closure. Liquidated damages will be assessed when roads remain closed beyond the approved times.
- It is anticipated that all applicants will follow the California Film Commission's "Filmmaker's Code of Professional Responsibility" and "Community Good Neighbor" Code of Conduct, which can be found at www.film.ca.gov.

REQUESTS AND INQUIRIES

If you have questions or wish to obtain a copy of the complete road closure policy, please contact the VCPWA-RT Permits Section at: **(805) 654-2055** or via email to PWA.TransPermits@venturacounty.gov.