

FIRE LANE MARKING REQUIREMENTS

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT of FIRE & RESCUE
Office of the Fire Marshal



If you have any questions or comments regarding the information contained within, or if you need assistance interpreting these requirements, please contact

Howard County Department of Fire & Rescue, Fire Marshal's Office
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PURPOSE

This document provides guidance for business and property owners regarding the types of fire lane markings and how and where such markings are installed within Howard County, Maryland.

BACKGROUND

Section 18.2.3.1.1.1 of the Howard County Code delegates the responsibility for designation of fire lanes and fulfillment of marking requirements to the Department of Fire and Rescue Services [DFRS]. Within the Department, this is managed by the Office of the Fire Marshal.

Fire lanes identify an area that must remain clear of obstruction at all time for essential use by emergency vehicles. This use could include vehicle travel, vehicle maneuvering, turning radius, or stationary parking in proximity to a building for purposes of an operation during an emergency incident. Any roadway or curb in Howard County may be designated as a fire lane. This includes, but is not limited to, private roadways, private driveways and public streets where adequate emergency vehicle access may be difficult.

BASIC GUIDELINES

Fire lanes may be established by the Authority Having Jurisdiction [AHJ] as follows:

1. DFRS determines access is an issue upon site visit or inspection.
2. DFRS receives a request for an evaluation of access from a County agency or County resident.
3. DFRS identifies potential access issues during review of a site development plan or building plan.

The need for fire lane designations along curbs near buildings or in parking areas is dependent on the site plan, parking configuration, access to the building, and access to water sources as determined by the AHJ.

The need for fire lane designations along roadways is dependent on access available to emergency vehicles on a road and a base of operation for the Fire Department. The primary consideration is road width. The following guidelines are used when evaluating the need for fire lanes on roadways:

- Both sides of a road 16 feet or less in width will be designated as a fire lane.
- Roads between 16 feet and 24 feet in width will be evaluated and the designation of a fire lane determined by the actual width and configuration.

- One side of a road that is between 24 feet and 28 feet may be designated as a fire lane.
- Fire lanes are not required on roadways wider than 28 feet.
- A turning radius of 45' must be maintained.

Only Fire Lanes designated by the AHJ may have fire lane markings and are subject to enforcement penalties. Marking of Fire Lanes may be required, at anytime, if a need is identified by the AHJ.

INSTALLATION OF MARKING AND/OR SIGNS

It shall be the duty of the owner, tenant or agent in control of said property to install fire lane markings within thirty (30) calendar days of written notification by the AHJ. Fire lanes must be designated and marked according to specification by the AHJ to be valid and enforceable. The Department of Fire & Rescue Services must have copies of the current designated fire lane markings on file.

MARKING METHODS

Fire lane markings are required in different locations depending upon the land-use and/or development in which they are being installed. Markings are also required for certain fire apparatus access features such as turnarounds. Situations may arise where the AHJ may adjust the indicated marking methods.

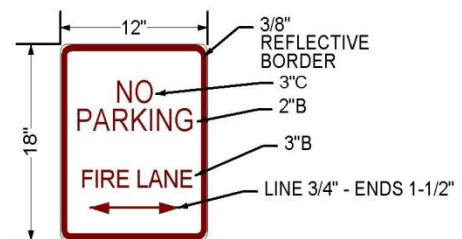
There are four basic marking methods. The procedures for marking fire lanes are established as follows:

Marking Method 1

Unless specifically directed by the AHJ, the erection of Fire Lane signs are preferred versus painted curbs. Signs erected must meet the following criteria:

Sign Specifications

1. Fire Lane Signs
 - a. Size – 12” wide by 18” high
Thickness - .080 “
 - b. Material – Aluminum
2. Color – Reflective red letters and border on a reflective white background
 - a. Lettering – NO 3”C
PARKING 2”B
FIRE LANE 3”B



FIRE LANE 3”B

Directional Arrow Line $\frac{3}{4}$ ” - ends $1\frac{1}{2}$ ”

- b. Each sign must have an arrow
3. The use of the international symbol no parking sign type is also authorized.



4. Placement of Signs

- a. Limit of Zones – The enforceable limits of any Fire Lane shall be delineated by the placement of Fire Lane signs at both termination points. All fire lanes will require a minimum of two signs.
 1. Short Zones (Curb less than 100 feet)
Fire Lane signs shall be placed at each end of the marked lane with opposing arrows.
 2. Long Zones (Curbs in excess of 100 feet)
Fire lanes signs should be spaced approximately 100 feet apart. Long zones will require a minimum of 3 signs. When signing “long zones” it is necessary to incorporate a double point arrow on the middle sign(s) and a single pointing arrow on the end signs indicating the limits of the fire lane zone. Signs shall not exceed 100 feet; more than one arrow sign between end signs may be required.
- b. No Fire Lane signs shall be mounted so as to interfere with pedestrian movement.

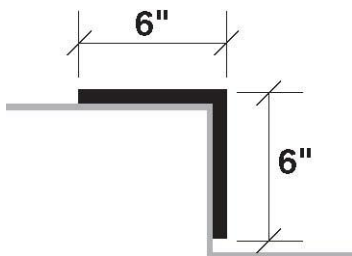
5. Posting of Signs

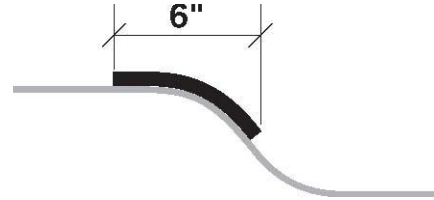
- a. Fire Lane signs shall be mounted on new posts approximately one foot back of the curb. Where applicable, mounting may also be on posts installed in grass areas beyond a sidewalk where such sidewalk does not exceed five (5) feet in width and adjoins the curb. The mounting of signs on the face of the building is specifically discouraged as being ineffective from an enforcement standpoint and shall not be used in the absence of marked curbs.
- b. All signs shall be mounted at a 30 – 45 degree angle to the Fire lane curb in the direction of travel unless orders to the contrary are received from the AHJ concerning special circumstances which require alternative signing.
- c. Fire Lane signs shall be mounted at the height of seven (7) feet to the bottom of the sign. However, slightly lower mounting height may be approved if existing construction conditions so require.

Marking Method 2

Where a curb exists along a designated Fire lane, common “Red Traffic Paint” will be used to paint the entire top and vertical surface of the curb. The painted surface will extend for the full length of the designated Fire Lane. This type of paint is readily obtainable from a building materials or paint store. Paint may be applied by either brush, roller, or sprayed application.

At each end of the Fire Lane, within the red painted area, the legend, NO PARKING – FIRE LANE will be painted in white letters three inches (3”) high on the top of the curb. This legend shall be placed on the top of the curb on 20 feet centers. All curb types, asphalt, rounded, barrier, open section, combination curb and gutter, etc., shall be marked in this manner.





Marking Method 3

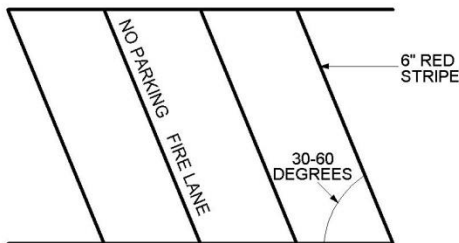
A combination of signs and marking of the curbs may be used as an enforceable marking method.

The sign will need to follow the procedures indicated in Method 1 and the curb areas will be marked in red. The stenciling (indicated in Method 2) is not required on the curb areas marked in red.

Marking Method 4

Roadways may require marking that have no curb areas or place for signs.

1. The AHJ shall approve designs to mark roadways as a firelane. The design may vary according to the road and areas to be marked. The design shall use a hatch pattern, diagonal red 6 inch striping across the width of the Fire Lane. The stripes shall run at a 30 to 60 degree angle and shall be parallel with each other. The striping shall be a minimum 6 inches in width and a maximum of 72 inches apart. It shall be used in conjunction with minimum 6 inch lettering, NO PARKING FIRE LANE verbiage in white traffic paint. The lettering layout may vary according to the size of the fire lane marking.



EXISTING PARKING SPACES

Any existing parking spaces in a designated Fire Lane curb must be eliminated. This shall be accomplished by removing the lines.

REEVALUATION of FIRE LANE MARKINGS

Periodic review or public disregard of the current postings may require the AHJ to

reevaluate the designated areas and adjust the markings accordingly. Within thirty (30) days of receipt of such notice, the property owner must complete installation of the additional postings and arrange for inspection.

COST and MAINTENANCE

All costs associated with Fire Lane marking on private property are the responsibility of the respective owners or agents.

All Fire Lane markings and signs must be properly maintained. The AHJ will perform periodic checks to ensure proper maintenance of all Fire Lane markings.

INSPECTION

Upon completion of the required firelane marking, the Office of the Fire Marshal must be notified. A satisfactory inspection must be completed. The inspection requirement will apply to the installation, either initially or subsequently, of any and all marking related to Fire Lane designation. A failure of action or incorrect marking may dictate the issuance of a citation. This is a Class C violation.

ENFORCEMENT

Per the requirements of the Howard County Code Title 17.104, Section 18.2.3.1.1.5 allows Fire & Rescue to establish the procedures and enforce these requirements for fire lanes. A Fire Official may enforce these provisions with Civil Penalties.

Pursuant to the provisions of Title 21 of the Howard County Code, the Howard County Police Department is authorized to eliminate parking violations in established fire lanes by impoundment of vehicles or the issuance of summonses.

DEFINITIONS

AHJ/DFRS (Authority Having Jurisdiction). For the purpose of this document the authority having jurisdiction is the Howard County Department of Fire & Rescue Services (DFRS).

Fire Lane/Fire Department Access Road. Fire Lane is defined as a fire department access road or area in front of a structure which is marked with approved signs or other approved notices. The markings shall be marked in accordance with the rules and regulations adopted by the AHJ.

A Fire Department Access Road can be any road, public street, private street, use-in common driveway, parking lot lane, access roadway or other means developed to allow access and operational setup for fire fighting and rescue apparatus. A use-in-common driveway or access place road serving more than one

single family-dwelling may be considered a fire department access road. This may be a dedicated road designed only for fire apparatus access and marked as a fire lane.

Fire (Emergency) Service Vehicles. All emergency vehicles properly designated and titled by the Maryland Department of Transportation, Motor Vehicle Administration.

Questions?

Please Contact:

**Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services
Office of the Fire Marshal
(410) 313-6040**

Remember: Assistance should be requested as soon as possible to ensure compliance with the thirty (30) day installation requirement.