

Roads

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the status of the road I live on?

Call Klamath County Public Works at (541) 883-4696 for road status information. Usually we can tell you from our road maintenance records if a road is a county road, state highway, city street, local access road or private road. Sometimes, it is difficult to give a definite answer for many unimproved roads without further research.

I live on a county road within a city. Why isn't my street a city street?

When land is annexed to a city, the jurisdiction for many government services becomes the city's. However, roads and streets are an exception. County roads do not automatically become city streets upon annexation. The city must formally accept the street as part of its system. To have your road converted to a city street you should contact your city's administrative office.

Vacation of a Public Right-of-Way

The county may formally vacate a county or local access road. To vacate a road the County Board of Commissioners must find that there is not public need for the given right-of-way now or in the future and that no one's access to or through the property would be cut off due to the road vacation. Klamath County in general has only vacated a few roads in its history. Klamath County does not have a formal procedure defined by the County so we follow the process defined by State Law ORS 368.326 through 368.366.

I live on a "Local Access Road" that the county does not maintain although it is a public road. Can my road become a county road?

If the abutting property owners improve a local access road to county standards for right-of-way width, base course, width of roadway surface and paving it **may be** accepted as a county road and be maintained by the county depending on location, traffic volumes and other factors. The County Public Works Department needs to be involved to verify design and construction to verify compliance. The Board of Commissioners may deny conversion of a road due to it not being a benefit to the public.

Why are there not any street lights on the county road?

Street Lights: If you have any questions relating to street lights please refer to ORS 372.010 *et seq* regarding Highway Lighting Districts. In general, County Roads do not have street lights unless the adjacent land owners have formed a lighting district.

What are the differences between county maintained paved and county maintained gravel roads?

Maintenance to County roads begins with an order from the Board of County Commissioners that accepts a constructed road, into the County Road Maintenance system. Within that order the road is classified as either an "A", "B", or "E" class road. The classifications were originally created on February 5, 1971 and later amended in Order #2008-016 on August 21, 2007 by the Board of County Commissioners. The classifications are as follows:

- **Class A:** Roads constructed by Klamath County or by governmental contract using County road funds.
- **Class B:** Roads Constructed and funded by private contractors for developers or residents.
- **Class E:** County roads that receive limited County funded maintenance regardless of the original source of construction funding.

The types of maintenance Class "A" & "B" roads receive is generally but not limited to

- asphalt paving,
- chip seals,
- crack seals,
- storm drain management,
- road sign management,
- regular snow plowing,
- bridge repair

The types of maintenance Class "E" roads receive is generally and limited to the following:

- Grading the roadbed twice a year (*Early spring and late fall when optimum moisture, through rainfall, is present within the gravel surface)
- Applying dustoff **, (springtime) to limit the amount of dust created from public travel.
- Limited snow plowing. See winter level of service tab in the Public Works web page for more information on the County snow plowing program.
- bridge repair
- road sign management

* Note: It is not cost effective to use water trucks to provide moisture.

**Note: Dust abatement (dustoff) creates a hardened wearing course by binding the fines in the aggregate resulting in a sealed top that limits the amount of dust produced during travel. Unfortunately that sealed top becomes very hard during the winter months and makes maintaining potholes difficult if not impossible without damage to equipment and or the roadbed.

The County has approximately 850 miles of County maintained roads of which approximately 100 miles are gravel. Gravel roads may be narrow, steep, dusty, muddy and rough. Choosing to live on a gravel road can impact response time for ambulance, fire and police emergencies. After road grading by County staff, the gravel road is typically dusty for several weeks or months and vehicles tend to drive faster. County staff receive many complaints for dust and speeding after performing maintenance on gravel roads.

What difference does road status make?

The primary difference is in who is responsible to maintain the road: state, county, city or local property owners. The status also affects who must be contacted about permits for action in the right-of-way or for general maintenance such as pothole repair or snow plowing. A public road exists to allow the public to travel so gates or other blockages are only permitted under extraordinary circumstances. If you wish to report a damaged sign, large pothole, guardrail damage please call the Klamath County Road Shop at (541) 883-4585.

I'm still confused. Who can answer my questions?

For information about county roads, local access roads, and dedicated ways, please call us at (541) 883-4696. For information about federal forest roads, you should contact the appropriate federal agency and for information about any road within city limits, please call the appropriate city (City of Klamath Falls, Bonanza, Chiloquin, Merrill, Malin). For state highways please contact the Oregon Department of Transportation at (541) 883-5662.