
2026 Town Road and Bridges Standard update information for applicants

From Canarecci, Kim <Kim.Canarecci@vermont.gov>

Date Fri 4/17/2026 3:45 PM

To Canarecci, Kim <Kim.Canarecci@vermont.gov>

Cc Johnson, Mark <Mark.Johnson@vermont.gov>; Pentkowski, Ron <Ron.Pentkowski@vermont.gov>; Hosking, Richard <Richard.Hosking@vermont.gov>; Ivey, Carter <Carter.Ivey@partner.vermont.gov>; Schaeffler, Lisa <Lisa.Schaeffler@vermont.gov>; Clingan-Darack, Sophie <Sophie.Clingan-Darack@partner.vermont.gov>

 3 attachments (1 MB)

2026 Town Road and Bridge Standards.pdf; 2026 Town Road and Bridge Standards Cover Letter (21January2026).pdf; 2026 Town Road & Bridge Standards - 2026 Update Summary.pdf;

Please disregard this email if you are NOT a TOWN Public Assistance Applicant.

I have blind copied all DR4720 and DR4810 registered applicants to this email.

Municipal Applicants,

Vermont Emergency Management has been notified that VT Agency of Transportation (VTRANS) updated the Town Road and Bridge Standards effective January 21, 2026.

As partners in statewide recovery, we encourage all towns to adopt these new standards right away. Doing so will ensure that your town is eligible to receive ERAF funding in case of a future federally declared disaster. Adopting these standards will also allow FEMA to pay for meeting these standards in future disasters. Please refer to attached documents to see what changes have occurred to the standards.

Please work with your VTRANS district representative to update this information in the state registry.

“excellence in teamwork”

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AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES
AGENCY OF TRANSPORTATION

January 21, 2026

Re: 2026 Town Road and Bridge Standards

Dear Municipal Officials,

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources and the Vermont Agency of Transportation have jointly updated the Town Road and Bridge Standards, effective January 21, 2026. These standards are an updated version of the 2019 Town Road and Bridge Standards. Sections 1 and 2 (Municipal Roads and Class 4 Roads) are still required for hydrologically-connected roads under the Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP). Section 3 (Perennial stream crossings) is still required statewide and must follow the DEC Stream Alteration Standard. Adoption of standards for non-hydrologically-connected roads remains optional. Municipalities may continue to use their own town road standards if the town standards meet or exceed the State template.

The major changes to the optional standards (Sections 4-8) apply to **Section 5 – Drainage Crossings**, cross culverts that move water from one side of the road to the other. When a municipally owned or maintained cross culvert is replaced, it must now be at least 18 inches in diameter, where road layout allows. Culverts that frequently plug, wash out, or fail during storms are expected to be upsized when replaced. Section 5 provides a clearly adopted standard for drainage (cross) culverts that are not otherwise covered by the MRGP or stream alteration standards. This section does not apply to intermittent or perennial streams, which continue to be handled under their own standards.

Municipalities are encouraged to consider adoption of additional optional standards to improve the resiliency of municipal highway infrastructure, enhance public safety, and to realize as many benefits as possible from the FEMA Public Assistance program. VTrans District personnel are available to work with any municipality in explaining the various options and to answer questions related to the new town road and bridge standards template. Please contact your nearest VTrans District Office for assistance and information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie Moore".

Julie Moore P.E.

Secretary

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Flynn".

Joe Flynn

Secretary

Vermont Agency of Transportation

2026 Town Road and Bridge Standards Outline Summary of Updates

Major Change:

- New optional standard (Sections 4-8) **Section 5 – Drainage Crossings**, cross culverts that move water from one side of the road to the other. When a municipally owned or maintained cross culvert is replaced, it must now be at least 18 inches in diameter, where road layout allows. Culverts that frequently plug, wash out, or fail during storms are expected to be upsized when replaced. Section 5 provides a clearly adopted standard for drainage (cross) culverts that are not otherwise covered by the MRGP or stream alteration standards. This section does not apply to intermittent or perennial streams, which continue to be handled under their own standards.

Minor Changes:

- Updating reference and link for the latest version of the Vermont Better Roads manual that has been in place since 2024.
- Section 8 – updating standard drawing reference. Old B-71 standard was split into B-71a & B-71b for commercial and residential drives, respectfully.
- Updating of language in reference to ANR Stream Alteration Permits and permits through Army Corps of Engineers that denote those permits, including any requirements to have a permit or requirements within the permit, supersede these codes and standards. This was always the case, but was not stated in previous versions.
- Updated language that documents the existing practice to waive a code or standard when it would render the road unsafe for travel. Case by case basis with concurrence from local district office. This was always the case, but was not stated in previous versions.
- Updated language refers to green infrastructure stormwater practices that are more commonly used than during previous versions. This is not a requirement but to acknowledge that some cases may deem one of those practices more appropriate than the normal best management practices historically used.
- Updating new number 4 & 5 notes in Appendix A, Section 1, Part D in both Municipal and Private culverts to reference proper perennial and intermittent stream sizing. This was always the case, but was not stated in previous versions under these sections.
- Updating of the language and layout in Appendix B to better address proper sizing of intermittent stream crossings. These requirements did not change, but older versions did not describe the process/method well. This update is to best capture requirements in the sizing study.