Frequently Asked Questions

Below is a list of frequently asked questions. They are broken up into two sections; Roads and Driveways. If you would like more information, please contact the Highway Department at (603) 269-2091 or roadagent@barnstead.org

ROADS

1. Why is my dirt road so bumpy and full of potholes?
   a. Most of the roads in Barnstead evolved from paths, and then widened to accommodate vehicles. The base of the roads, were never improved to accommodate the weight and speed of present day vehicles that pass over them. As a result, areas have a poor base and when vehicles stop and start (such as school buses or people turning into driveways) the action churns up the gravel and creates potholes and a washboard effect.

2. Why does my road washout so much?
   a. This could be a number of reasons depending on the amount of storm water. Roads are created with a crown so water will shed off of them. In most cases the water can run off without impacting anything. When it can’t, a ditch is put in to control where it goes. Property owners with a ditch in the right-of-way are required to have a culvert. If the culvert gets plugged, water builds up and washes out the road. It is the responsibility of the homeowner to keep the culvert clean. (See Driveway Questions and RSA 236:13)

3. Who is responsible for the area around my mailbox?
   a. The property owner is responsible for the approach and area around the mailbox.

4. Why are roads posted for so long in the spring?
   a. The surface of roads, paved and gravel will warm up during the day and refreeze at night. The subsurface remains frozen and water cannot be absorbed. With additional rain and snow, water is unable
Frequently Asked Questions

to drain under the road which makes the surface unstable. Heavy vehicles cause damage to roads by shifting the surface creating cracks which develop into pot holes on paved surfaces. On gravel roads they create ruts and the stopping and starting motion creates pot holes.

5. Why do I see heavy vehicles on posted roads?
   a. Some services are exempt, such as oil delivery, and garbage pick-up. To prohibit these services would be an inconvenience to residents. New for 2020, Highway will be issuing a no fee permit.

6. Why do I see other types of heavy trucks during this time?
   a. The Highway Department works with companies to get their deliveries made. They call and get permission, their information is logged. Companies requiring written approval contact the Highway Department at (603)269-2091.

7. Trees have been cut along the road. Why isn’t the Town picking them up?
   a. The Highway Department has the authority to clear trees on the street side of a stone wall on each side of the road for safety reasons. All trees taken down are the responsibility of the property owner to handle.

8. Why does it take so long for the Town to plow my road?
   a. Roads are prioritized as to which get plowed or treated first. If school is in session, bus routes are done first. If school is called off, main roads are done first. Other roads are done after. There are six assigned plow routes. Each truck plows and treats the road at the same time. As the truck’s sander empties, the truck has to return to the Highway Garage to get refilled then return to their route. Gravel roads require more treatment than paved. As a result, the trucks
Frequently Asked Questions

have to return to the Highway Garage more often which slows down the route from being completed.

DRIVEWAYS

1. When do I need a driveway permit?
   a. When a driveway is being constructed, modified, resurfaced or moved. Resurfacing includes a new layer of asphalt, gravel or any other wearing material, except seal coating.

2. How much does a Driveway Permit Cost?
   a. The fee is $25. New construction and culvert replacements are waived. Applications can be obtained at Town Hall or on the Town of Barnstead Website, Highway Department Page.

3. How long is the permit good for?
   a. All work must be completed and the final inspection signed off by the Road Agent within one year from the date of issue.

4. What are the specifications for a driveway?
   a. They can be found in the Driveway Regulations and Application on the Planning Board Web Page

5. What is the difference between a road culvert and a driveway culvert?
   a. Road Culverts go under town roads  
      b. Driveway culverts allow property owners to access the road from their property.

6. Why do I need a culvert? I can access my property without one.
   a. Driveway culverts are just a small component of the road storm water drainage system. When not properly maintained they cause water to pool and back up on the road creating ice in the winter and washouts in the spring, summer and fall seasons. When this happens
Frequently Asked Questions

it not only poses a safety threat to travelers on the road system, but also deteriorates the road.

7. Who is responsible for the maintenance on my driveway culvert?
   a. The property owner is responsible for maintaining any driveway culvert on their property per RSA236:13, VI. This includes keeping them cleaned out, maintaining headwalls and replacing them when needed.

8. My property didn’t require a culvert when it was built, does the Town have authority to tell me to put in a culvert?
   a. Yes, per RSA 236:13 VI. The Town or Planning Board has the authority to tell any property owner at any time they need to install a driveway culvert.

9. Who does the culvert installation?
   a. It is up to the property owner to either contract someone or do the work himself/herself.

10. What happens if I don’t comply?
    a. If the work is not completed, the property owner is liable for any damage to the road caused by non-compliance.
    b. The work to repair the damage would be completed by the Town in which the Property Owner would be billed.