

Coastal Encroachment Program's Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is an encroachment?

Encroachments are often in the form of landscaping but can consist of fencing, walkways, patio furniture, yard adornments, or anything that extends beyond the property line. "No Parking" or "Private Parking Only" signs placed in the public right-of-way by property owners are also considered an encroachment.

2. What is a "conforming" or "non-conforming" encroachment?

A conforming encroachment is a private improvement in the right-of-way that has a current, County-issued Encroachment Permit, either from the County's Department of Public Works or the Parks Department.

A non-conforming encroachment is a private improvement in the right-of-way that does not have a current County-issued Encroachment Permit.

3. Do I need to apply annually for a Coastal Encroachment Permit?

Yes, Coastal Encroachment Permits expire July 1st of each year. Permit holders must reapply each year and provide documentation the encroachment has not been modified from the preceding year. Permit fees are calculated using the County's [Unified Fee Schedule](#) and are due no later than July 1st.

4. What is the public right-of-way?

The public right-of-way is the publicly owned land or easement in which publicly maintained facilities, such as roadway, may be placed. The private property/public right-of-way boundary can often be identified by locating utility boxes, which are placed in the public right-of-way. If the public right-of-way boundary is disputed, a private property owner may hire a Licensed Land Surveyor to determine the exact boundaries of the right-of-way.

5. Are all roads in the county public right-of-way?

No, there are three road classifications in the county:

- **Public roads** are constructed to County standards and maintained by the County, typically connect to other public roads at both ends, and serve as an accessway to residential, commercial, and recreation areas. Example: 30th Avenue.
- **Private roads** are maintained by the property owners along the road, typically are constructed using alternative standards, connect to a public road on only one end, and serve a small residential area. Example: Matthews Lane.

- **Public roads that are not maintained by the County** typically are not constructed to County standards, are open to the public but are maintained by the property owners along the road. Example: 24th Avenue

6. Will the Coastal Encroachment Program provide parking permits?

The County's Coastal Encroachment Program is not authorized to issue waivers or permits for parking. Parking complaints should be directed to the California Highway Patrol (CHP) at their non-emergency number (1-800-TELL-CHP or 1-800-835-5247).

7. There is an abandoned vehicle in the right-of-way. Where do I report an abandoned vehicle?

The County Sheriff's Office - Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Division handles abandoned vehicle complaints. A vehicle is considered abandoned when it has been parked in the same location for a minimum of 72 hours. You may report an abandoned vehicle to the Sheriff's Office by filling out the request found at the following web page [abandoned vehicle](#), through the County application My Santa Cruz County, or by phone at (831) 454-7602.

8. What do I do about vehicles that are parking within the public right-of-way?

The right-of-way is owned by the public, and as such is available for parking equally to all members of the public on a first come-first serve basis (with some restrictions); no member of the public may place signage or other markings to reserve parking within the public right-of-way.

To legally park in the public right-of-way, the vehicle must be:

- parked completely out of any traffic lane (which ends at the white edge line),
- parked in the direction of travel,
- may not block driveway entrances, fire hydrants, crosswalks, ramps, or bike lanes,
- may not park in intersections, and
- parking must be in overall accordance with the vehicle code.

Some road segments have parking restrictions and have been labeled with signage and/or red curb striping to indicate parking is not allowed there. Any signage or other official markings used to indicate special event parking, construction zones, or areas closed for safety should be followed.

9. Who do I contact about illegally parked vehicles?

Please contact the California Highway Patrol (CHP) at their non-emergency number (1-800-TELL-CHP or 1-800-835-5247) to report illegally parked vehicles, file accident reports, ask tow questions, find CHP office locations, learn vehicle theft tips and about community outreach

programs, and for all non-emergency purposes. CHP personnel answers the 1-800-TELL-CHP telephone number 24 hours a day, seven days a week.