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# FAQ – Engineering Roads Funding Policy

June 2024

Ministry of Forests

- What are resource roads?

Resource roads in B.C. are constructed to develop, protect and access the province's natural resources. They also serve as crucial links for many rural communities and access to highly used recreational opportunities.

- What types of resource roads are there?

There are Forest Service Roads (FSRs), Road Permit Roads, roads maintained by the Oil and Gas Sector, Private Land roads, and public roads administered by the Ministry of Transportation. If you are unsure of a road's status, please contact your local natural resource district office. The Ministry of Forests inspects and designates maintainers for FSRs only; all other resource roads are managed by the companies who have the permits for these roads.

- Who uses resource roads?

Resource roads are used primarily by industrial vehicles engaged in forestry, mining, oil and gas or agricultural operations. Members of the public and commercial operators (i.e., ski hills, fishing lodges) also use resource roads. Some resource roads lead to rural communities and residences and are used daily by the public.

- How are resource roads regulated?

Resource roads are regulated by the Forest Act, Forest Range Practices Act, Forest Planning Practices Regulation, and Forest Service Road Use Regulation.

- Who is responsible to maintain and deactivate FSRs in B.C.?

By and large, the industrial user of the road is responsible for maintenance to a safe standard for their intended activities while in use. When roads are not in use by an industrial user, the roads largely fall under an environmental maintenance status as a wilderness road. Roads are maintained to protect environmental values and road prism integrity.

By default, the Ministry of Forests, including BC Timber Sales, maintains roads to wilderness standards where no other user is present and no obligation to maintain to a higher standard exists. The Ministry maintains roads to communities, rural residences and high value recreational sites when no industrial user is active and as budgets permit.

- How many kilometres of FSRs are there in B.C.?

There are approximately 60,000 km of FSRs.

- What happens to FSRs that are not maintained?

If not maintained, wilderness roads become eroded and/or overgrown and, unless a user assumes maintenance obligations, eventually may have to be deactivated or closed to reduce risks.

- Do all unmaintained FSRs have to be deactivated?

No. Some resource roads provide important tourism or recreational opportunities and are inspected on a risk basis. These roads are left open unless closure is necessary to protect the environment and/or mitigate other risks.

- What criteria are used to allocate funding to FSRs in B.C.?

It is important to recognize that limited funding and resources exist to maintain and upgrade FSRs provincially. We do not have the ability to maintain all FSRs but focus our resources on the high-use, critical infrastructure FSRs. The Ministry prioritizes how funds are allocated to road maintenance (operating) and major road and bridge improvement (capital) projects in the following order by road use type, using a detailed priority rating exercise and in considerations of various impacts and consequences related to road prism integrity:

1. Roads accessing communities (First Nations and non-First Nations)
2. Roads serving rural residences
3. High value recreation sites
4. Other legislative requirements (e.g., deactivation and remediation)

- Are FSRs maintained for emergency access and egress?

The Ministry does not receive specific funding to maintain alternate egress routes. Egress routes may be comprised of active or inactive FSRs, non-status roads, other resource roads or public highways. Alternate egress routes may be activated during emergency response activities throughout B.C. The decision to utilize an FSR as an alternate egress route is completed on a case-by-case basis.

- What is a capital road?

In the context of the Engineering Program, a capital road includes a road accessing a community, group of rural residences or high value recreation site. A capital road is always an FSR, whereas FSRs are not always capital roads. Definitions for these three classifications of capital roads are as follows:

**Community FSRs:** These important public roads provide primary access to a group of 50 or more year-round residents within a specific locality and are not scattered.

**Road Serving Rural Residence:** These FSRs provide primary access to a primary residence or residences along the road and are subject to 0.4 year-round residences per kilometre (1 year-round residence for every 2.5 km). These roads do not meet the critical definition of a Community FSR. These roads do not include instances where 'water access' is listed on Titles for the residence(s).

**High Value Recreation FSR:** These roads provide primary access to High Value Recreation Sites and Trails as officially designated by the Ministry of Environment, Recreation Sites and Trails Division OR designated representative as *Important Recreational Areas* by the Regional District Executive Director. May also be an area where an FSR provides access to a Provincial Park, recreation feature or significant recreation areas and designated as such by the application of the Regional Executive Director with input from local District Managers.

- What principles does the Engineering Program use to allocate funds?

The Ministry's Engineering Program staff maintain roads and make capital improvements as they are identified and as resources allow. The following principles are followed when allocating funds to manage and maintain a safe resource road network throughout the province:

- Allocate funds based on priority
- Allocate funds in an open and transparent manner
- Allocate funds consistently—generally use the same criteria to make ranking decisions

- What is the annual budget for capital and operational road works?

The engineering program in Fiscal Year 2024/25 has a capital budget of \$26.3 million for major upgrades to the 12,000 km capital road network.

A \$17 million annual operational budget maintains 45,000 kilometres of FSRs (which includes the 12,000 km of capital roads), where the priority is on the capital road network.

#### **Learn More:**

Resource Roads: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/natural-resource-use/resource-roads>

#### **Contact information:**

For more information on the engineering program, please contact your local [Natural Resource District office](#).

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/managing-our-forest-resources/ministry-of-forests-lands-and-natural-resource-operations-region-district-contacts>

Contact the Engineering Branch directly: [FLNREng.Branch@gov.bc.ca](mailto:FLNREng.Branch@gov.bc.ca)

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