

## *Purpose of the Pamphlet*

The Crook County Road & Bridge Department is responsible for maintenance of County roads in the unincorporated areas of Crook County. If you have a road issue please call Road & Bridge at 307-283-1441 or check the county website at [crookcounty.wy.gov](http://crookcounty.wy.gov).

The purpose of this pamphlet is to inform people who intend to build a house near a gravel road, of some of the items that should be considered before deciding on the distance of the house from the road. Minimum setback requirements are shown on subdivision plats or specified in the County setback policy online. However, many rural homeowners have found that these setback requirements are not adequate on a gravel road because of road dust and traffic increases.

## *Road Dust*

Road dust is essentially limestone dust that is kicked up by traffic traveling on the road. Tires grind the limestone on the road and make a continuous supply of fine material. Once the dust is kicked up by traffic it is blown by the wind. Houses downwind from the prevailing wind will have more dust than those upwind. In Crook County, road dust is generally more of a problem on the north and east sides of a gravel road than it is on the south and west sides of the road. The Road & Bridge Department recommends that all houses be built at least 300 feet from a gravel road in order to reduce most problems associated with road dust to a reasonable

level.

Many people do not realize how serious the dust problem can be until living in a new house for a number of months. The Road & Bridge Department has seen a trend that people are not satisfied with living on a gravel road for an extended period of time. Many people expect that they can leave their windows open and enjoy the country air. However, they later find they may need to keep their windows closed to prevent road dust from entering the house. Although dust is not considered a carcinogen, it can pose health problems for persons with allergies and other respiratory problems.

## *Traffic Increases*

You should be aware that there will be short term and long term traffic increases on most roads. The County does not have a program to upgrade gravel roads to blacktop roads or 4-lane roads with county tax money. It is unlikely that the County will ever upgrade the gravel road to a blacktop road.

## *Dust Control Program*

Counties in Wyoming are not required to control dust on county roads. Crook County does have a pay program to reduce the amount of road dust in front of rural homes in the summer. The cost is variable from year to year, and there is a 1000 ft. treatment minimum. Contact the Road and Bridge Dept. for current pricing. Dust control is only applied during the months of May, June &

July, so applications and payment are due **March 31**. The material used is MC-30 and the length of time the application is effective will vary based on weather, traffic, and drainage. Further information can be obtained by calling Crook County Road & Bridge at 307-283-1441.

The purpose of the dust control program is not to encourage people to build along gravel roads, but is to offset the effect of dust from increases in traffic that have occurred in the past due to rural population growth.

**All of Crook County's policies and procedures are posted at:**

[www.crookcounty.wy.gov](http://www.crookcounty.wy.gov)

Go to Department, Road & Bridge.



## ***Gravel Road Problems***

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There are several other problems associated with a gravel road that you might not be aware of unless you have previously lived on a gravel road. During and after a rain the roadway surface can become soft and the surface material may be thrown off the tires and will stick to the car like mud. Due to dust and mud it is hard to keep a car clean that regularly travels a gravel road.

Occasionally the surface of a gravel road is bladed to correct the crown and smooth down any surface irregularities. During the blading a windrow will be left in the middle of the road. This windrow will require that you drive with more care than usual. There is also loose material on the surface and a motor grader in the area.

Gravel roads inherently require more maintenance, sometimes the road will be rough with corrugations and potholing between maintenance intervals. Gravel roads are not as wide as paved roads so you should slow down when meeting other vehicles. Rocks can be kicked up from other vehicles causing windshield and paint damage.

You should drive slower on a gravel road than a paved road, because the stopping distance on gravel is much longer than on paved surface. Additionally, if you drive out of the track where there is loose gravel, it is easy to lose control. Once you lose control on a gravel road, it is much more difficult to regain control than on a paved surface, so it is more

likely that there will be an accident.

A majority of Crook County's roads are Open Range, meaning the roadway is not fenced and that cattle, sheep, other livestock and wildlife may be on the roadway. Motorists should slow down and make their way by the animals which will usually move when approached by a vehicle. These areas are typically marked with a sign that reads "OPEN RANGE". Livestock is contained to that area using cattle guards, which is a metal grate designed for vehicles to cross and livestock cannot. Use caution when meeting traffic in these areas as most cattle guards are narrower than the roadway.

### ***Summary***

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If you build on a gravel road, consider the items covered in this pamphlet and the recommended 300 feet setback.

Do not expect the rural area to stay the same as when you purchased your property. If you intend to move into rural Crook County, it is likely others may follow. What is now a rural area may develop into a suburban area. The quiet country road in front of your home may become a heavily traveled dusty road.

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# ***Gravel Roads and Dust Control***

## ***Crook County Road & Bridge 2015***

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