

JANUARY 1998

NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL HIGHWAYS

CLASSIFICATION OF HIGHWAYS

In order to understand the several forms of aid available to cities and towns in New Hampshire, first consideration should be given to the several classifications of the highway system.

CLASSIFICATION OF HIGHWAYS  
(RSA 229:5)

**Class I, Trunk Line Highways**, consist of all existing or proposed highways on the primary state highway system, excepting all portions of such highways within the compact sections of cities and towns. The state assumes full control and pays costs of construction, reconstruction and maintenance of its sections; the portions in compact areas are controlled by the cities and towns under Class IV highways.

**Class II, State Aid Highways**, consist of all existing or proposed highways on the secondary state highway system, excepting portions of such highways within the compact sections of cities and towns, which are classified as Class IV highways.

All sections improved to the satisfaction of the commissioner are maintained and reconstructed by the State. All unimproved sections, where no state and local funds have been expended, must be maintained by the city or town in which they are located until improved to the satisfaction of the Commissioner of Transportation.

All bridges improved to state standards on Class II highways are maintained by the State. All other bridges on the Class II system shall be maintained by the city or town until such improvement is made. Bridge Aid funds may be utilized to effect such improvements.

**Class III, Recreational Roads**, consist of all such roads leading to, and within, state reservations designated by the Legislature. The state highway department assumes full control of reconstruction and maintenance of such roads.

**Class III-a, Boating Access Highway**, shall consist of new boating access highways from any existing highway to any public water in this state. All Class III-a highways shall be limited access facilities as defined in RSA 230:44. Class III-a highways shall be subject to the layout, design, construction, and maintenance provisions of RSA 230:45-47 and all other provisions relative to limited access facilities, except that the Executive Director of the Fish and Game Department shall have the same authority for Class III-a highways that is delegated to the Commissioner of the Department of Transportation for limited access facilities. No access shall be granted to an abutter for any Class III-a highway. A Class III-a highway may be laid out subject to gates and bars or restricted to the accommodation of persons on foot, or certain vehicles, or both, if Federal funds are not used. The Executive

Director of Fish and Game may petition the Governor and Council to discontinue any Class III-a highway.

**Class IV, Town and City Streets**, consist of all highways within the compact sections of cities and towns. Extensions of Class I (excluding turnpikes and interstate portions) and Class II highways through these areas are included in this classification. Municipalities with compacts are listed in RSA 229:5.

**Class V, Rural Highways**, consist of all other traveled highways which the city or town has the duty to maintain regularly.

**Class VI, Unmaintained Highways**, consist of all other existing public ways, including highways discontinued as open highways, and made subject to gates and bars, and highways not maintained and repaired in suitable condition for travel thereon for five (5) successive years or more. However, if a city or town accepts from the state a Class V highway established to provide a property owner or property owners with highway access to such property because of a taking under RSA 230:14, then notwithstanding RSA 229:5, VII, such a highway shall not lapse to Class VI status due to failure of the city or town to maintain and repair it for five (5) successive years, and the municipality's duty of maintenance shall not terminate, except with the written consent of the property owner or property owners.

Scenic Roads, are special town designations of Class IV, V and VI highways where cutting or removal of a tree, or disturbance of a stone wall, must go through the hearing process and written approval of local officials. (See RSA 231:157).