

## Barrier versus Surmountable Curb

by Kelsey Gelhar   Dec 1, 2017   1195 Visits   Municipal Engineering

Concrete curbs are used to direct drainage flow and provide a safe, visual distinction between the roadway and boulevard. In residential neighborhoods, the two most commonly used curb types are surmountable curb and barrier curb. Both types of curbing discourage drivers from parking in lawns, driving on sidewalks, or driving through lawns to turn around. They also provide structural support to the pavement edge and help to channel runoff to storm sewer systems to improve the overall drainage in neighborhoods.

Most curbs used in new developments are **surmountable** curbs. These shallow curbs are easy to drive over and are often installed before houses are built. **Due to their low profile, they do not require curb cuts for future driveways.** This means that driveways in the development can be any width (within city standards) and the entrance can be placed anywhere along the lot without disturbing the new curb or roadway. However, this type of curb can lead to abrupt changes in driveway grade since the slope of the curb is often set before driveways are constructed.



When streets in established neighborhoods that do not have curb and gutter, have a failing curb and gutter, or have deteriorating bituminous curb are reconstructed, **barrier curbs** are typically installed.

**Although these curbs tend to be slightly more expensive than surmountable curbs due to requiring more concrete per linear foot of curb and more intensive labor to create curb cuts at existing driveways, barrier curbs create a safer distinction between the roadway and boulevard. Because of the shape, barrier curbing helps to discourage drivers from driving onto lawns, boulevards, or parking into yards. This can increase the safety for pedestrians using roadside amenities such as trails or sidewalks.**



Ultimately, when installing new curb and gutter or replacing existing, specific site considerations will determine the type of curb and gutter installed. These considerations include the number and slope of driveways, pedestrian usage, roadway speed, drainage patterns, as well as future development or usage.

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