

2.4 UTILITY AND ACCESS OPENINGS

2.4.1 GENERAL

This policy specifies the minimum design criteria for utility, future utility, and access openings in bridges.

2.4.2 POLICY

The openings shall comply with the requirements specified herein.

- Except for ramp structures, provide future utility openings in addition to any planned utilities.
- When providing for future openings is not possible, the planned utility openings shall be enlarged to accommodate future utilities.
- The designer shall evaluate the structural adequacy near any opening and modify the reinforcement layout as needed.

2.4.3 ACCESS OPENINGS FOR CONCRETE BOX GIRDER BRIDGES

A sufficient number of access openings shall be provided to accommodate inspections and maintenance of the entire length of utilities and bridge deck drainage systems, and accommodate future utility installations.

All soffit access openings shall be provided with a locking mechanism, irrespective of the distance from the ground.

2.4.4 REFERENCES

1. Caltrans. (2025). *Standard Plans*, California Department of Transportation, Sacramento, CA.
2. Caltrans. (2025). [*Utility Manual for Bridges and Other Structures*](#), California Department of Transportation, Sacramento, CA.