



Tuesday, June 15, 2021 16:39

Construction material costs increased this year, says Maine DOT

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BANGOR — City and state agencies that handle road construction say the COVID-19 pandemic has affected material costs.

Paul Merrill of the Maine Department of Transportation said **the cost of materials used in road construction has increased.**

“Maine DOT has been impacted by the rising cost of materials this year because of COVID,” said Merrill.

Merrill said the **team has made some tough calls because of the limited availability of resources.**

“We’ve seen steel prices go up two and threefold, same thing with lumber which is not news to anybody who does any sort of home construction and it **limits our ability to do work,”** he said.

Merrill said **increased steel prices have stretched the amount of money the department can spend on construction project bids.**

At the city level, Bangor Public Works Director Aaron Huotari said they’re in a different situation.

“Across the board, we’re seeing price increases, but public works particularly have been lucky in that we had a lot of supplies on hand,” said Huotari.

Huotari said the number of projects they have scheduled also helped the city department.

“If we didn’t have the materials, we were fortunate enough to have contracts in place to maintain our previous pricing,” said Huotari.

He said having the number of supplies on hand like they did this year doesn’t always happen.

“This year we’ve been lucky we hope to ride it out we’re already seeing lumber prices come down they’re seeing a 41 percent drop in lumber prices since the high in May,” he said.

Huotari said he hopes the city will continue to stay on the good side of things.