




STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MICHAEL F. EASLEY
GOVERNOR

LYNDO TIPPETT
SECRETARY

February 5, 2002

MEMORANDUM TO: Division Engineers

FROM: J. D. Goins, P.E.
Chief Engineer – Operations 

SUBJECT: Policy on Roadside Memorials for Highway Fatalities

The North Carolina General Statutes (NCGS) and the North Carolina Administrative Code (NCAC) prohibit the "piling of obstructions" and erection of non-regulatory signs on highway rights of way. In keeping with the NCGS and NCAC, on November 8, 2001, the Board of Transportation adopted a policy prohibiting roadside memorials within highway rights of way. As an alternative to the erection of memorials, the Board of Transportation encourages participation in the Adopt A Highway Program or landscape plantings. In the case of law enforcement officers, the Board of Transportation has previously adopted a policy for naming bridges after them.

By law, the NCDOT is authorized to remove memorial items placed within highway right of way. Memorial items include, but are not limited to, crosses, wreaths, and signs. Beginning February 1, 2002, when memorial items are detected during routine highway inspections, the date, location and description of the memorial should be documented. Prior to removing roadside memorials, when practicable, an effort should be made to contact family members to inform them the memorial items must be removed. After 30 days, the items are to be removed by NCDOT forces and taken to the nearest NCDOT maintenance facility to be stored for a period of up to 30 days to allow the items to be picked up by the affected family. At that time, the NCDOT may dispose of such items.

Please note that if the memorial creates an immediate safety or maintenance problem, the memorial should be removed as soon as possible.

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TRANSPORTATION BUILDING
1 SOUTH WILMINGTON STREET
RALEIGH NC

Attached is a sample letter that may be used to notify a family their memorial must be removed. Also attached is information on the Adopt-A-Highway program for memorial adoptions and roadside memorial plantings on highway right-of-way.

JDG/tp

Attachments

cc: Lyndo Tippet
Gene Conti
Len A. Sanderson, P.E.
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W. S. Varnedoe, P.E.
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