

**North Carolina Department of Transportation  
Division of Highways  
Mobility and Safety Division**

**Guidance  
FOR  
Sponsorship Signing**

The purpose of this Guidance is to provide assistance on the use of Sponsorship Signing within State maintained facilities. Sponsorship programs provide an opportunity to generate support to operate and or maintain facilities, services, including, but not limited to, adopt-a-highway litter removal programs, maintenance of parkway or interchanges, rest area operation and maintenance, other highway beautification sponsorship programs, travel information services, and emergency service patrols. The installation of these sponsorship signs need to operate within balance against other necessary traffic control devices (i.e. regulatory, warning, guide and other general service signs).

As indicated in the Manual on Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), this practice will require that eligible sponsoring organizations comply with State laws prohibiting discrimination based on race, religion, color, age, sex, national origin, and other applicable laws.

The following criteria is guidance adopted by North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to maintain consistency, and to be compliant with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

**Design Guidelines**

- Sponsorship signs should clearly indicate the type of highway services provided by the sponsor.
- In addition to the general provisions for signs described in Chapter 2A of the MUTCD and the sign design principles covered in the FHWA “Standard Highway Signs and Markings” book Section 1A.11 of MUTCD, sponsorship sign designs shall comply with the following provisions:
  - Neither the sign design nor the sponsor sponsorship logo panel shall contain any contact information, directions, slogans (other than a brief jurisdiction-wide program slogan, if used), telephone numbers, or Internet addresses, including domain names and uniform resource locators (URL);
  - Except for the lettering, if any, on the sponsor logo panel, all of the lettering shall be in upper-case letters as provided in the “Standard Highway Signs and Markings” book (see Section 1A.11) of MUTCD;
  - In order to keep the main focus on the highway-related service and not on the sponsorship sign, the area reserved for the sponsor logo shall not exceed 1/3 of the total area of the sign and shall be a maximum of 8 square feet, and shall not be located at the top of the sign;
  - The entire sign display area shall not exceed 24 square feet;
  - The sign shall not contain any messages, lights, symbols, or trademarks that resemble any official traffic control devices;

- The sign shall not contain any external or internal illumination, light-emitting diodes, luminous tubing, fiber optics, luminescent panels, or other flashing, moving, or animated features.
- The sign shall not distract from official traffic control messages such as regulatory, warning, or guidance messages.
- The sponsorship signs shall have a blue background, a white border, and white legends of upper-case letters and numbers. The sponsorship sign design is required to be reviewed and approved by the Signing and Delineation Unit prior to installation to ensure compliance with the MUTCD.
- Each sponsorship logo panel shall be placed on a separate sponsorship sign. The sponsorship logo panel shall be either an identification symbol/trademark or a word message. A sponsorship logo panel that resembles an official traffic control device shall not be used. The sponsorship panel design/artwork will be approved by local Highway Division and their designated individual.

### **Location requirements**

- Regulatory, warning, and guide signs have a higher priority. Sponsorship signs shall only be installed where adequate spacing is available between the sponsorship sign and other higher priority signs. Sponsorship signs shall not be installed in a position where they obscure the road users' view of other traffic control devices.
- Sponsorship signs shall not be installed at any of the following locations:
  - On the front or back of, adjacent to, or around any other traffic control device, including traffic signs, highway traffic signals, and changeable message signs.
  - On the front or back of, adjacent to, or around the supports or structures of other traffic control devices, or bridge piers.
  - At key decision points where a road user's attention is more appropriately focused on other traffic control devices, roadway geometry or traffic conditions, including exit and entrance ramps, intersections, grade crossings, toll plazas, temporary traffic control zones, and areas of limited sight distance.
- The minimum spacing between sponsorship signs and any other traffic control signs, except parking regulation signs, and mile marker signs should be:
  - 150 feet on roadways with speed limits of less than 30 mph.
  - 200 feet on roadways with speed limits of 30 to 45 mph.
  - 500 feet on roadways with speed limits greater than 45 mph.
- If the placement of a newly-installed higher-priority traffic control device, a highway traffic signal, or a temporary traffic control device conflicts with an existing sponsorship sign, the sponsorship sign should be relocated, covered, or removed by the sponsor provider.
- Sign locations, installation and replacement installation can either be completed by Division personnel or sponsor provider, depending on language identified in the contract. The applicable

contract language will be provided to the appropriate Division(s) by Roadside Environmental Unit.

- Sign installation is required to follow 2018 Roadway Standard Drawings 904.50 for mounting type D, E, F signs on U- Channel posts.
- Sign fabrication is required to follow 2018 Standard Specifications for Roads and Structures Section 901, 903, and 904.
- Use supports of sufficient length to permit the appropriate sign mounting height. Spliced supports are not permitted on new construction.
- Sign placement for sponsorship signing should be installed as close to the beginning of the segment or facility type as feasible, taking into account safety, utilities and existing signage. If unable to sponsorship signing within segment or facility type, contact Roadside Environmental Unit.

### **Maintenance**

- The Roadside Environmental Unit is the Administrator of the Sponsorship Signing programs and contracts which are the Rest Area Sponsorship and Sponsor-A-Highway Program.
- The Roadside Environmental Unit in conjunction with Division staff will assist in monitoring signs to determine whether they have become damaged, vandalized or stolen. Responsibility for sign replacement depends on the language identified in the contract.
- The Roadside Environmental Unit or sponsor provider will be responsible for ordering initial and replacement signs, depending on language identified in the contract. The applicable contract language will be provided to the appropriate Division(s) by Roadside Environmental Unit.
- The Signing and Delineation Unit will provide sign designs associated with sponsorship program upon request.
- The Roadside Environmental Unit will provide WBS element numbers to incur any charges associated with installation.
- The NCDOT reserves the right to cover, relocate, or remove any signs for maintenance or construction operations, or when deemed to be in the best interest of the NCDOT or the traveling public, without advance notice. The NCDOT reserves the right to remove signs when roadway improvements or changes in the roadway cross section or configuration will no longer accommodate the existing signs.
- This practice is not intended for use in removal of existing signs; however, when a new project is established for the North Carolina highway system, or when existing signs are in need of replacement, repair or maintenance conformance with this practice is required.