

**North Carolina Department of Transportation  
Division of Highways  
Traffic Engineering and Safety Systems Branch**

**STANDARD PRACTICE  
for  
Supplemental Guide Signs for Moderate Traffic Generators**

The purpose of this standard practice is to set minimum guidelines for supplemental guide (directional) signing for moderate traffic generators (*rather than major traffic generators which is specified in TEPL practice T-13*) to guide unfamiliar motorists to places or facilities that generate enough traffic volume to warrant signing along NCDOT roadways. This practice is intended to restrict signing along NCDOT roadways for facilities that do not generate a minimum level of traffic by unfamiliar motorists. It is not intended to allow signing for the purpose of advertisement of businesses, places, facilities, or initiatives. The intent is to set reasonable guidelines to promote statewide consistency in responses to signing requests for moderate traffic generators.

It is the standard practice of NCDOT to allow installation of supplemental guide signs for fully qualifying moderate traffic generators except as follows. This practice should *only* be applied to requesting facilities that do not qualify for the Logo Program or the Tourist Oriented Directional Sign (TODS) Program, or that are not specified under another standard practice, or that are not listed on TEPL topic T-15. If the facility qualifies as an attraction in the Logo Program or tourist oriented business/facility in the TODS Program and adequate space is available for sign installations, then the facility shall be offered signing under one of these programs and shall not be signed as an individual supplemental guide sign. Supplemental guide signs are not considered a signing option due to full program signs or inadequate space for program signs. Program information can be found as follows <http://www.ncdot.org/~Logo> or <http://www.ncdot.org/~TODS>.

Signs shall be designed, located and erected according to the standards of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), the North Carolina Supplement to the MUTCD, the North Carolina Roadway Standard Drawings, and the standards and criteria herein.

## **CRITERIA**

Supplemental Guide Signs for moderate traffic generators: These signs guide travelers to sites and specific facilities of interest, such as cultural, recreational, and historical facilities that generate moderate levels of traffic. The criteria and fee structure for signing moderate traffic generators are as follows:

- To qualify for supplemental guide signing as a moderate traffic generator, the facility shall have documented vehicle trip generations in amounts between 100,000 and 250,000 annually. A trip is defined as a single or one direction vehicle movement with either the origin or destination (exiting or entering) inside the site. For trip generation purposes, the total trip ends for a land use over a given period of time are the total of all trips entering plus all trips exiting a site during a designated time period. A bus is considered a single vehicle, and all persons on a bus count as one trip in and one trip out. Only unfamiliar motorists such as tourists or visitors will be counted in vehicle trip generation for the purpose of qualifying for sign installations. Trips generated by employees and regularly reoccurring trips such as deliveries and other services are not considered unfamiliar motorists.
- Facilities generating less than 100,000 trips annually do not qualify for signing on NCDOT highway right-of-way, unless specified otherwise in a specific practice or program.

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- All documentation required to verify that qualification criteria are met shall be provided to the Department by the requester. Three (3) consecutive years of data shall be included with request. This information could be supplied in terms of parking passes distributed, total on-premise parking spaces available specifying the number of bus parking spaces, attendance records, financial statements showing revenue earned from ticket sales, or other data to determine trip generation. One person (attendee) does not equate to a trip. Facility must maintain minimum criteria for signs to remain in place. The Department may request/require documentation at any time from the facility to verify criteria are met.
- Signs for qualifying moderate traffic generators shall be limited to the closest freeway not to exceed 15 miles from the facility in rural areas and 5 miles from the facility in urban areas. Signs located on non-full control of access and partial control of access facilities, and all conventional roadways shall be limited to 15 miles from the facility in rural areas and 5 miles from the facility in urban areas and shall not be signed further than the closest primary (US/NC) route. Additionally, the one-way trip to the destination is limited to 4 turns with the return trip to the exited roadway via the same path, and the trip must generally be a direct (noncircuitous) route from the roadway. However, a one-way trip to the destination requiring more than 4 turns, or on a circuitous route, or requiring a return trip via a different path will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the appropriate Engineer or designate to determine if approved.
- If freeway signing is approved, and when more than 2 turns are required to reach the destination from the freeway (not including the turn from the ramp or the turn into the entrance to the facility), route markers with directional arrows shall be installed to indicate the routing back to the freeway. This return trip route signing shall be paid for by the requester.
- Moderate traffic generators that are not event-oriented facilities shall be operational and staffed with one or more attendants for traveling guests/tourists/customers a minimum of 5 days a week, 8 hours a day for a total of 40 hours per week to qualify for signs.
- Moderate traffic generators shall have a permanent on premise sign posted in a prominent and visible location that states the name of the facility with the days and hours of operation. If the facility is an event-oriented facility without regular hours of operation, the days and hours are not required on the sign.
- The facility shall provide written assurance of the facilities conformity with all applicable laws concerning the provisions of public accommodations without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, disability or national origin.
- The facility shall provide on-site public restroom facilities, drinking water suitable for public consumption, and an on-site telephone available for public use.
- The facility shall have adequate on-site parking during hours of operation for guests, tourists, and customers.
- If the requesting facility has a web site, clear and specific directions, preferably with a map, shall be posted on the web page.
- When signed, moderate traffic generators shall be shown on supplemental guide signs. Supplemental guide signs for moderate traffic generators shall not be installed as overhead signs.

- Supplemental guide signs for moderate traffic generators should be minimized and combined with other supplemental guide messages when appropriate. Supplemental guide signs for moderate traffic generators shall not be installed at freeway-to-freeway interchanges.
- Signing for moderate traffic generators is considered supplemental to the overall signing system for freeways and expressways. Therefore, before a sign for a moderate traffic generator is installed, sufficient space shall exist to accommodate the placement of the sign without interfering or conflicting with required signing.
- Moderate traffic generators shall be signed generically (unless similar facilities are within close proximity of each other).
- Sign designs shall conform to the attached NCDOT sign typical. Color shall conform to MUTCD standards. For example, a historic site that is being signed as a moderate traffic generator shall have generic message on brown background with white text.
- All requests for signing on partial and non-full control of access facilities must be approved by the appropriate Division Engineer, or designate, having jurisdiction in the county in which the signs are proposed. All requests for signing on full control of access facilities must be approved by the State Traffic Engineer.
- All costs for qualifying and approved supplemental signing (including mainline, ramp and trailblazers to facility), route markers for return trip, and future maintenance costs for all these installations shall be the responsibility of the requesting facility.
- An agreement between the Department of Transportation and the individual requesting the signs will be required including payment by the requester for all initial costs for the signs. Initial costs include design, administration, field investigation, materials, installation, and inspection. Requester is also responsible for all future maintenance costs. The signs are subject to removal if payment for maintenance has not been made to the Department within 60 days of written request from the Department. Any removal cost associated with non-payment will be the responsibility of the requester. Agreement will be cancelled upon sign removal, and any request for reinstallation will be handled as a new request.
- The Division may require the requester to hire and pay a pre qualified private contractor that is approved by the Department and licensed to work in North Carolina, to install and/or maintain the signs. All materials and workmanship must comply with the Department's current version of the Standard Specifications for Roads and Structures. Traffic control shall be in accordance with the MUTCD, North Carolina Supplement to the MUTCD, and the current version of the NCDOT Roadway Standard Drawings. The Contractor shall not be allowed to perform any work on weekends or Official State holidays. The Contractor shall furnish Proof of Insurance prior to beginning work within the Department's Right of Way.
- The Division Engineer, or designate, having jurisdiction in the county in which the signs are proposed will make signing decisions concerning one-time or annual events that draw large crowds. These events will be investigated on individual basis based on the merits of each request. Such signs would be removed at the conclusion of the special event. If one-time or annual event signing is approved, Division may require requester to contract out installation and removal of event signs.

- Office buildings and retail establishments shall not be signed on state highway right of way. Shopping Centers may be signed as specified in title 19A NCAC 02B.0215 and if approved by the State Traffic Engineer.
- The Department has the responsibility and authority to relocate or remove signs if a need for a higher priority regulatory, warning, guide sign, or specific signing program sign (Logo or TODS) is identified. No refund or reimbursement will be made for removed signs.
- 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. No refund or reimbursement will be made for removed signs. If existing signs no longer meet the Department's size and design requirements for an upgraded roadway and existing signs are removed, the facility may request to upgrade their signs, provided that minimum spacing is available on the upgraded roadway. -
- 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.
- As described in General Statute 136-30 (a), (b), and (d), the NCDOT has the authority to control all signs within the right of way of the State Highway System.

**§ G.S. 136-30. Uniform signs and other traffic control devices on highways, streets, and public vehicular areas.** (a) State Highway System. - The Department of Transportation may number and mark highways in the State highway system. All traffic signs and other traffic control devices placed on a highway in the State highway system must conform to the Uniform Manual. The Department of Transportation shall have the power to control all signs within the right-of-way of highways in the State highway system. The Department of Transportation may erect signs directing persons to roads and places of importance. (b) Municipal Street System. - All traffic signs and other traffic control devices placed on a municipal street system street must conform to the appearance criteria of the Uniform Manual. All traffic control devices placed on a highway that is within the corporate limits of a municipality but is part of the State highway system must be approved by the Department of Transportation. (d) Definition. - As used in this section, the term "Uniform Manual" means the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways, published by the United States Department of Transportation, and any supplement to that Manual adopted by the North Carolina Department of Transportation.