

19A NCAC 02B .0221 GENERAL MOTORIST SERVICES SIGNS

- (a) General Motorist Services Signs mean signs that provide travelers with directional information for essential motorist services. The signs carry word legends GAS, DIESEL, LP (PROPANE) GAS, FOOD, LODGING, BED AND BREAKFAST, PHONE, HOSPITAL, and TOURIST INFORMATION CENTER with appropriate directional legend, and the exit number where applicable. The cost associated with General Motorist Services Signs is the responsibility of the Department of Transportation.
- (b) Specific Services Signs mean signs erected under the Specific Information Signing Program as described in G. S. 136-140.7. These signs provide travelers with business identification and directional information for essential motorist services. The signs carry word legends GAS, FOOD, LODGING and CAMPING with appropriate directional legend, the exit number where applicable, and one or more business logos. The cost associated with Specific Services Signs is borne by the businesses whose logos are shown on the signs through initial and annual fees paid to the Department of Transportation.
- (c) Signing for general motorist services shall be installed only on rural fully controlled access highways and shall be in conformance with the "Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices." Requests for signing for general motorist services shall be directed to the highway division engineer having jurisdiction in the county in which the sign is proposed. If approved, services signing shall be installed and maintained by the Department of Transportation.
- (d) General Requirements for All Services. The requirements in this Paragraph shall be applied in determining the placement of service signs on the rural fully controlled access highways. Service signs shall be erected only at grade separated interchanges. A fully controlled access highway shall have neither a minimum length requirement nor minimum number of interchanges requirement to qualify for erection of service signs. A facility shall meet the specific requirements for signs in Paragraph (e). It shall have an outside coin-operated telephone in the immediate vicinity of the business (within the intersection area, at an adjacent business or across the road), which is accessible. A business phone at an adjacent business is not a public telephone for a particular applicant business. The maximum distance that a "Gas", "Diesel", "LP (PROPANE) Gas", "Food", "Bed and Breakfast" or "Lodging" service can be located from the facility shall not exceed three miles in either direction via an all-weather road. Where no qualifying services exist within three miles, the maximum distance may be increased to six miles, provided the total travel distance to the business and return to the interchange does not exceed 12 miles. When the nearest qualifying service is located more than three miles from the facility, the distance to the service shall be shown on the service sign at the ramp terminal. The maximum distance for a "Camping" service shall not exceed 10 miles. Said distances shall be measured from the point on the interchange crossroad, coincident with the centerline of the facility route median, along the roadways to the respective motorist service. The point to be measured to for each business is a point on the roadway that is perpendicular to the corner of the nearest wall of the business to the interchange. The wall to be measured to shall be that of the main building or office. Walls of sheds (concession stands, storage buildings, separate restrooms, etc.) whether or not attached to the main building are not to be used for the purposes of measuring. If the office (main building) of a business is located more than 0.2 mile from a public road on a private road or drive, the distance to the office along the said drive/road shall be included in the overall distance measured to determine whether or not the business qualifies for business signing. The office shall be presumed to be at the place where the services are provided.

(e) Specific Requirements for Erection of General Motorist Services Signs:

- (1) Gas, Diesel, LP (PROPANE) Gas, and Associated Services. Criteria for erection of a Gas service sign, a Diesel service sign, or an LP (PROPANE) Gas Service sign shall include:
 - (A) appropriate licensing to operate as required by law;
 - (B) vehicle services for fuel, motor oil, tire repair (by an employee) and water;
 - (C) restroom facilities and drinking water suitable for public use;
 - (D) an on-premise attendant to collect monies, make change, and make or arrange for tire repairs; and
 - (E) year-round operation at least 16 continuous hours per day, 7 days a week.
- (2) Food. Criteria for erection of a Food service sign shall include:
 - (A) appropriate licensing to operate as required by law, and a permit to operate by the health department;
 - (B) year-round operation at least 12 continuous hours per day to serve three meals a day (sandwich type entrees may be considered a meal) (breakfast, lunch, supper), 7 days a week;
 - (C) indoor seating for at least 20 persons; and
 - (D) public restroom facilities.
- (3) Lodging. Criteria for erection of a Lodging service sign shall include:
 - (A) appropriate licensing to operate as required by law, and a permit to operate by the health department;
 - (B) sleeping accommodations consisting of a minimum of 10 units, each including bathroom and sleeping rooms except a lodging business operating as a "Bed and Breakfast" establishment with fewer than 10 units may request "Bed and Breakfast" signs;
 - (C) off-street vehicle parking for each lodging room for rent; and
 - (D) year-round operation.
- (4) Camping. Criteria for erection of a Camping service sign shall include:
 - (A) appropriate licensing to operate as required by law;
 - (B) meeting all state and county health and sanitation codes, and having water and sewer systems which have been duly inspected and approved by the local health authority. The operator shall present evidence of such inspection and approval;
 - (C) at least 10 campsites with accommodations for all types of travel-trailers, tents and camping vehicles;
 - (D) parking accommodations to meet current demand;
 - (E) continuous operation, 7 days a week during business season. A business sign shall be removed or masked by the Department during off seasons, if the campground is operated on a seasonal basis.
- (5) Phone. Signs may be posted for a phone location only in respect to outdoor telephone booths where service is available on a twenty-four hour basis.
- (6) Hospital. Hospital signs shall consist of the word "Hospital" along the main roadway and the blue "H" at the end of the ramp. The blue "H" shall be used to trailblaze from the ramp terminal to the hospital where needed. The intent of providing "Hospital" signs along interstate or controlled access highways is to direct unfamiliar motorists to a hospital in case there is a need for emergency medical services. The

- blue "Hospital" sign shall be used on the interstate or controlled access highways. These hospital signs shall be used only for hospitals equipped to handle emergency cases with a physician on duty 24 hours each day and within a practical distance from the interchange. A blue sign showing the name of the hospital at the end of the ramp along with the proper directional arrow may be provided when a traffic engineering investigation has shown the need. Trailblazer signs where necessary shall mark the route to the hospital using the blue "H". Use of the name of the hospital on green directional signs along conventional (non-interstate or non-controlled access) type streets and roads when a traffic engineering investigation has shown they are needed may be permitted. These green directional signs apply only to those hospitals which do not provide the 24-hour emergency service.
- (7) Service signs shall not be erected on non-controlled or partially controlled access facilities or at locations within or near municipalities where it is obvious to the motorist that services are available.
- (f) Tourist Information Center. Tourist information center service signing may be approved and installed by the Department of Transportation when the following conditions are met:
- (1) The motorist using the highway in a particular direction must be able to leave and return to the highway via the same interchange and continue in the same direction of travel.
 - (2) The service must be located in a rest area on the freeway or within one mile of the interchange offramp and on a direct route from the freeway.
 - (3) The service must operate continuously for at least eight hours per day, seven days per week, and 360 days per year.
 - (4) At least one separate and trained attendant with knowledge of tourist facilities in the state shall be on duty to service visitors during all hours of operation.
 - (5) The facility must have available at no charge to visitors complete information on tourist facilities in the state; such as lodging, auto service, food, medical, recreational, historical and scenic sites; and it must also be readily available when attendant is off duty.
 - (6) The service must be housed in a separated area from other facilities in an appropriate building to provide an area, heated in winter and cooled in summer, of not less than 625 square feet of floor area for displays and lounge devoted for providing this service.
 - (7) The service must have at least one 50-pocket rack for noncommercial public service materials and displays.
 - (8) The service must have rest room facilities available at no cost to the visitor and designed for use by handicapped individuals.
 - (9) The service must have drinking water approved by appropriate local authority.
 - (10) The service must have a public telephone designed for use by handicapped individuals.
 - (11) The service must have off-street parking at no cost to the motorist and must have curb cuts and ramps for the handicapped.
 - (12) Any displays, literature, magazines, etc., that would be judged by the Department to be offensive to visitors with children must not be readily visible.
 - (13) The service must provide designated facilities for pets.

(14) The name of the operating agency, community, group or enterprise shall not appear in the legend of any sign.

(g) Removal of General Motorist Services Signs.

(1) If municipal limits are revised so that an interchange is totally within a municipality, then existing general motorist services signs may be retained in place so long as they are in a serviceable appearance and are not in need of refurbishing maintenance.

When the signs are no longer serviceable they shall be removed.

(2) When specific services (Logo) signing is installed along a section of controlled access roadway, then the existing general motorist services signing shall be removed on that section of roadway except as covered in Subparagraph (g)(3) of this Rule. When general motorist services signs exist on a controlled access roadway inside a municipality that does not qualify for specific services (Logo) signing, the general motorist services signs may remain in place, except as covered in Subparagraph (g)(1) of this Rule, until such time that all rural sections of the controlled access route adjacent to the municipality are covered, then the general motorist services signs shall be removed except as covered in Subparagraph (g)(3) of this Rule.

(3) The State Traffic Engineer, after consideration of such factors as the rural nature of the highway, frequency, and availability of motorist services and distances to those services, and after using engineering judgment, may, at his or her discretion, authorize the retention or addition of General Motorist Services Signs along sections of controlled access roadways signed with Specific Services (Logo) Signs or within municipalities.

History Note: Authority G.S. 136-18(5); 136-30; 136-128; 136-140.7;

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