



**COLORADO**  
Department of Transportation



# Guide Signing Policies and Procedures

2021 Edition



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# RESOLUTION OF TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

## **Resolution Number TC-2095**

### **Adopt Policy Directive 1500.0, “Guide Signing Policy”**

**WHEREAS**, § 43-1-106 (8)(a) C.R.S. (2011) gives authority to the Transportation Commission of Colorado (“Commission”) to formulate the general policy with respect to the management, construction, and maintenance of public highways and other transportation systems in the state; and

**WHEREAS**, current Policy Directive 1500.0 was adopted by the Transportation Commission on April 19, 2018; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to § 42-4-104 C.R.S., CDOT is charged with adopting a manual and specifications for a uniform system of traffic control devices for use upon highways within Colorado; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to § 42-4-104 C.R.S., CDOT’s Guide Signing manual must conform to the system set forth in the most recent edition of the "Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways" (“MUTCD”) and other related standards issued or endorsed by the federal highway administrator; and

**WHEREAS**, the Traffic and Safety Engineering Branch of the Department has completed a revision of the Guide Signing Policies and Procedures Manual (“Manual”) and ensured that it conforms to the MUTCD, which contains the standards and guidelines for the design and installation of highway signing; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission supports CDOT’s goal of guide signing by striking the appropriate balance between the needs of local governments, individual businesses, motorists and passengers, minimizing sign "pollution" and complying with federal and state law governing outdoor advertising and the design and application of highway guide signing; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the Commission herein ADOPTS Policy Directive 1500.0 “Guide Signing Policy.”

 Herman F. Stockinger III 7-3-12

Herman Stockinger, Secretary  
Transportation Commission of Colorado

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## INTRODUCTION

Of the many programs administered by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), one of the most visible but least understood is the area of highway guide signing. "Guide" signs are those official signs, manufactured and installed by CDOT and others, which give information about and direction to many different types of services and destinations. Examples include not only the commonly observed signs for **GAS, FOOD, LODGING, MUSEUM, TOURIST INFORMATION**, and so on, but also specific destinations like **ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK, COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES, LOVELAND SKI AREA**, and **FRONT RANGE AIRPORT**.

As a public agency, CDOT plays a major role in ensuring the economic vitality of our state and supports economic development in a variety of ways. We certainly recognize that local governments and individual businesses place a high value on guide signing. At the same time, motorists' needs and their ability to assimilate information, while engaged in the already complicated driving task, must be considered. Cost of the signs is another issue, as is the matter of controlling sign "pollution". Annually, CDOT receives hundreds of requests for highway signing from individual citizens, citizen groups and associations, businesses, local governments and elected officials. Given the magnitude and wide variety of these requests it is imperative that policies and procedures be developed to ensure that economic development is supported to the extent possible by providing motorists with necessary directional information in a consistent, understandable format. Most importantly, the policies and procedures must ensure that each request for highway signs is considered in a fair and equitable manner. The following information provides an outline of CDOT's policies and procedures related to the more common types of signing requests received by the Department. The reader will note that some of these signing areas "overlap"; this overlap offers (in some cases) options for addressing a particular sign request.

*The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)*, published by the Federal Highway Administration, is the national standard for the design and installation of traffic control devices (signs, signals and pavement markings) on all public roads open to travel. The principal purpose of such a national standard is to help ensure the safety of travelers by providing for the orderly and predictable movement of traffic throughout the highway transportation system, and to provide such guidance, regulation, warnings and information as are needed for that purpose. Colorado State law (C.R.S. 42-4-104) requires that CDOT provide traffic control devices in accordance with the provisions of the **MUTCD**. While the **MUTCD** contains rather specific criteria for the design and application of most traffic control devices, it provides only general design and location criteria for most guide signs and allows the states to develop individual policies for guide signs to meet local needs. The **MUTCD** states that no sign may contain any advertising or commercial message. This requirement is consistent with both state and federal outdoor advertising laws (exceptions are contained in the "Specific Business Information Signs" (LOGO) and "Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs" (TODS) Programs; page 44 contains information and links to the rules and regulations pertaining to these programs. The **MUTCD** can be found at: <https://www.codot.gov/safety/traffic-safety/assets/documents/mutcd/MUTCD09r1r2editionhl.pdf>.

Also, CDOT's Procedural Directive 1500.0, "Guide Signing Policy", supports CDOT's adherence to the **MUTCD** for the standards and guidelines for designing and installing highway signs.

To aid the states in the development of individual guide sign policies, an industry group known as the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) developed and published a document entitled Part I: Guidelines for the Selections of Supplemental Guide Signs for Traffic Generators Adjacent to Freeways; Part II: Guidelines for Airport Guide Signing;

and Part III: List of Control Cities for Use in Guide Signs on Interstate Highways – 2001: <https://store.transportation.org/>.

Colorado was represented on the AASHTO group that developed the Guidelines. The specific policies that follow are for the most part consistent with the recommendations contained in the Guidelines. In some cases, the attendance and/or distance criteria contained in Colorado's policies are less restrictive than recommended in the Guidelines; in no case do the requirements for signing exceed those contained in the AASHTO Guidelines. Other criteria used to develop CDOT sign policies include the provisions of both state and federal outdoor advertising laws and consideration of the signing policies of other states.

General questions, comments and observations regarding CDOT guide signing policies and procedures should be referred to:

Traffic & Safety Engineering Services  
Colorado Department of Transportation  
2829 W Howard Pl, 4th Floor  
Denver, Colorado 80204  
303-757-9654

Questions regarding or requests to install specific guide signs should be directed to the appropriate CDOT Region Office (see Figure 1 on page 5 for a CDOT Region Boundary Map and Region Traffic Contact Information). All signs proposed to be installed in CDOT right-of-way shall be designed in accordance to CDOT Standards and Specifications and the design layout shall be approved by the Region Traffic Engineer.

It is recognized that a number of existing guide signs do not conform with the policies contained within this document. To help ensure the fair and equitable implementation of these policies, existing non-conforming signs shall be removed upon reaching the end of their useful service life (10 years max.), when damaged, or at the discretion of the Region Traffic Engineer, whichever is earlier.

We at CDOT believe the guide signing policies and procedures that follow strike the appropriate balance between the needs of local governments, individual businesses, motorists and passengers; and consider everyone's desire to minimize sign "pollution" and comply with federal and state regulations governing outdoor advertising and the design and application of highway guide signing. While every effort will be made to accommodate requests for guide signs within the limits of these policies and the options they may provide; it is recognized that misunderstandings may occasionally occur during the administration of these policies. As such, a procedure has been developed to allow an applicant to request a review of the administrative decision regarding their request if the applicant believes the policies have been interpreted incorrectly by CDOT staff. A description of the Sign Policy Variance Committee process is included in this document on page 52.

The signs featured in this document are designed in accordance with the sizes, shapes, colors, and legends contained in the latest editions of the "Standard Highway Signs" book and "Colorado's Supplement to the MUTCD Standard Highway Signs". Both can be found at: <https://www.codot.gov/safety/traffic-safety/standard-and-specifications/signing-and-markings>.

The "Standard Highway Signs" book contains detailed drawings of standard signs, alphabets and symbols for highway signs and is found by clicking on the "FHWA Standard Highway Signs" link on the webpage above. "Colorado's Supplement to the MUTCD Standard Highway Signs" contains detailed drawings of Colorado specific highway signs.

If results, analysis, or studies from CDOT's Guide Signing Policies and Procedures are used and included in official documents for a CDOT project in the project development process, the Project Engineer and Resident Engineer shall follow the requirements of PD 21.1 and PD 508.1 for records retention and sealing.

## DEFINITIONS

The following words and phrases shall have the following meanings when used in this Policy Document:

**Adequate shoulder pull-off areas** – Areas meeting at least minimum roadway design criteria for ingress and egress to and from the location that is sufficiently removed from the travel way for the expected visitor activities.

**Approved Control Cities** – Cities that meet requirements set forth by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). These approved cities are then eligible to be posted on Navigational Guide Signs indicating forward destinations on an interstate or state highway.

**Clear Zone** – The total roadside area, starting at the edge of the traveled way, which is available for safe use by errant vehicles. It is an area on the side of the road that is free of potential hazards. This area may consist of a shoulder, recoverable slope, a non-recoverable slope and/or a clear-out area. The desired width is dependent upon the traffic volumes and speeds and the roadside geometry.

**Cross Street** – A street intersecting a major street and normally carrying the lower volume of vehicular traffic.

**Directional Signing** – A sign containing directional information about public attractions (and qualifies for signing under the policies in this document) of interest to the traveling public and having local significance.

**Educational Plaque** – A small sign mounted below new warning, regulatory, recreational and cultural interest area symbol signs not readily recognizable by the public. The educational plaque helps facilitate the public education and transition process from word message signs to symbol signs.

**Expressway** – A divided highway with partial control of access, and at-grade intersections.

**Freeway** – A divided highway with full control of access, and grade-separated interchanges.

**Interchange** – A system of interconnecting roadways providing for traffic movement between two or more highways that do not intersect at grade.

**Interstate** – A divided highway with full control of access, grade-separated interchanges, and is included as part of the national system of interstate and defense highways.

**Local Community Name** – An identification defining a geographic section that is governed by an established governing body, that and meets the population density requirements of the National Fire Plan (1 dwelling per 40 acres or 28 persons per square mile, minimum of 4 dwellings/8 people, basic infrastructure present, county/town/city road, power, and/or phones, with primary jurisdiction assigned.)

**Local Government** – City, town or county administration.

**Logo** – A distinctive emblem, symbol or trademark that identifies a local, state or federal entity.

**Mainline** – A section of freeway/interstate or expressway that consists of travel lanes only.

**Major Metro area** – An area with 250,000 or more in population in an urban area.

**Major Street** – The street intersecting a cross street and normally carrying the higher volume of vehicular traffic.

**Median** – The area between the two directions of a divided highway/freeway/interstate, measured from edge of traveled way to edge of traveled way. The median excludes turn lanes. The median width may vary between intersections, interchanges, and at opposite approaches of the same intersection.

**MUTCD** – Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

**Official Sign** – Any sign erected for a public purpose authorized by law.

**Operating Season** – Period of time a traffic generator is accessible for the traditional use or services expected by travelers.

**Other qualifying destinations** – Traffic generators, other than those specifically mentioned in this booklet that are destinations or special points of interest that are publicly-owned and/or operated or are operated by non-profit organizations that routinely attract a significant amount of traffic unfamiliar with the area. Commercial businesses are not eligible for consideration.

**Regulatory Sign** – A sign (usually with a white or red background) that notifies road users of traffic laws or regulations.

**Road Authority** – The local or state entity that is responsible for the control and maintenance of a section of roadway (typically CDOT or a county or city/town public works department).

**Rural area** – An area with less than 50,000 in population.

**Slogan** – A distinctive phrase, motto, or mission statement of a local, state, or federal government.

**Supplemental Plaque** – A small plaque mounted below new warning signs to display additional information to motorists that is beyond the main message contained in the warning sign.

**Unincorporated Towns or Cities** – A region of land that is not part of any municipality and does not have an established governing body.

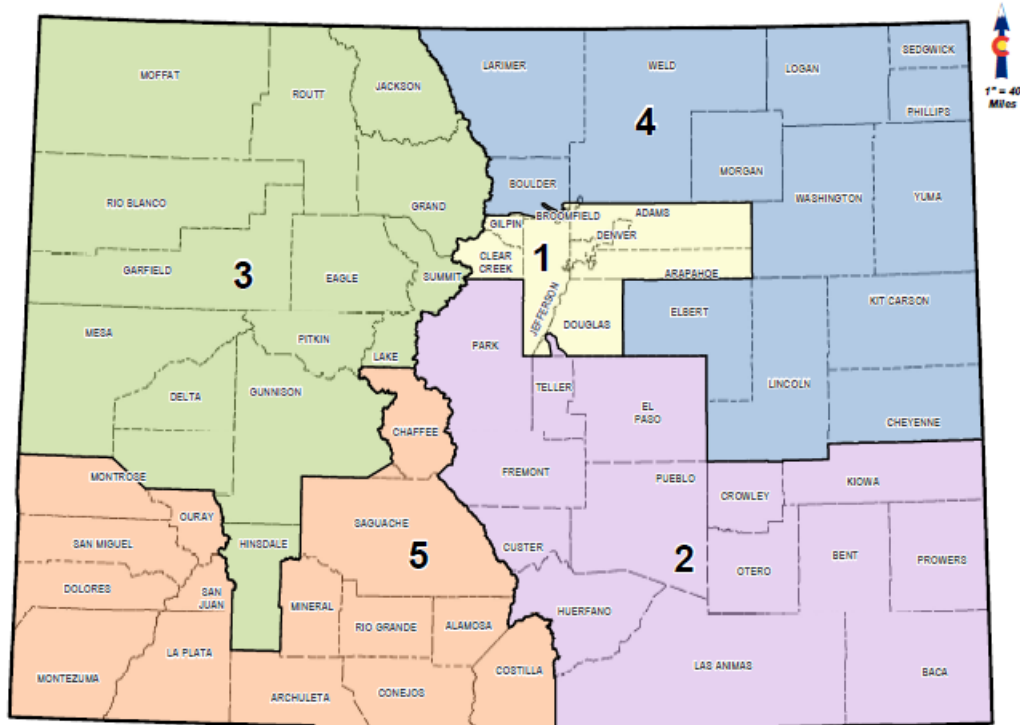
**Urban area** – An area with 50,000-249,999 in population.

**Warning Sign** – A sign (usually diamond-shaped) that warns road users of a situation that might not be readily apparent.

**NOTE: All distances contained in this policy document refer to roadway driving distances to the point of destination.**



## CDOT REGION BOUNDARY MAP



Region 1 Traffic Engineer  
2829 W Howard Pl, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Denver, CO 80204  
(303) 365-7318

Region 2 Traffic Engineer  
5615 Willis Blvd  
Pueblo, CO 81008  
(719) 546-5411

Region 3 Traffic Engineer  
222 S 6<sup>th</sup> St, Room 100  
Grand Junction, CO 81501  
(970) 683-6275

Region 4 Traffic Engineer  
10601 10<sup>th</sup> St  
Greeley, CO 80634  
(970) 350-2121

Region 5 Traffic Engineer  
3803 N Main Ave  
Durango, CO 81301  
(970) 385-1449

## SIGNING PRIORITIES

A basic concept of traffic engineering is the recognition that the primary purpose of highway signing is to warn, regulate and guide traffic. To achieve this purpose, it is important to understand that the amount of legend displayed on a sign and the spacing between signs impacts the driver's ability to read, comprehend and respond properly to a particular sign message.

Annually, CDOT receives numerous requests for highway signs. In some locations, requests to provide signing for qualified traffic generators exceed the space available. Since the installation of many sign messages within a short distance can create an "information overload" for the driver, decisions regarding sign selection, message design and sign spacing should be based upon the criteria established in the **MUTCD** and the policies contained in this booklet. When the number of qualified signing requests exceeds the available space for the signs, the following list of sign types shall be used to establish priorities for installation:

1. **Regulatory Signs** (*STOP, YIELD, RIGHT LANE MUST TURN RIGHT*, etc.)
2. **Warning Signs** (*CURVE, CROSS ROAD, SCHOOL BUS STOP*, etc.)
3. **Navigational Guide Signs** that identify the route a traveler must follow to complete a trip. On interstates and freeways, these are the primary interchange identification signs (*UNIVERSITY BLVD, GYPSUM*, etc.); on conventional highways, these signs indicate directions and distances to cities/towns and other well-known destinations.
4. **Emergency Medical Care** (See pages 9 and 11)
5. **General Traveler Services** (*GAS, FOOD, LODGING*, etc.) (See pages 10-13)
6. **Other Traffic Generators** of the types discussed in this policy document. Signing priorities for qualified traffic generators will be based upon the amount of traffic generated on an annual basis (See pages 43-44).

City and county boundary signing may be installed, and custom versions of such signs are permitted as set forth in the "Political Boundary/Identification" section of this policy document. In addition, this same section describes a method of providing directional signing for cities at freeway-to-surface street interchanges. At freeway-to-freeway interchanges, Navigational Guide Signs that employ the names of approved control cities are used to give general directional information to both interstate and intrastate travelers.

Given the large number of possible destinations accessible from urban interstate and freeway interchanges, the cross street name shall be used as the message on the primary interchange signing. In rural areas, either the cross street/road name or the adjacent local community name may be used as the message on the primary interchange signing.

## AIRPORTS

### Policy:

**Interstates and Freeways:** Public airports that are open to scheduled air service and/or general aviation and are within 10 miles of an interstate highway or freeway may be signed at the interchange most commonly used to access the airport. Private airports, or those without scheduled air services, shall not be signed.

**Conventional (Other) State Highways:** Public airports that are open to scheduled air service and/or general aviation and are within 10 miles of a conventional state highway may be signed at the intersection with the local street or road most commonly used to access the airport. Private airports, or those without scheduled air service, shall not be signed.

### Background:

Both general and commercial aviation play a major role in our overall Transportation System. Airports provide the interface between the various surface transportation modes (automobiles, buses, trucks, and rail) and air passenger travel/air cargo services. Because of their importance to the overall Transportation System and since they are often the destination of travelers unfamiliar

### Additional Criteria/Information:

The specific name of the airport may be included on the directional signing, if desired by the airport authority and local government. Any necessary trail blazer signing should be provided and installed by the appropriate road authority. Private airports requiring the owner's permission for use are not eligible for signing.

### Example Signs:



(Interstate/Freeway)



(Conventional State Highway)

## COLORADO WELCOME CENTERS

### Policy:

**Interstates/Freeways/Conventional (Other) State Highways:** All centers must have adequate signs approved by the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO). CDOT has the responsibility for placement and maintenance of all Colorado Welcome Center highway signs.

### Background:

The Colorado Tourism Office Welcome Center Program plays an important part in our overall Transportation System. The Colorado Tourism Office Welcome Center Program is committed to enhancing visitors' experiences and helping create lasting memories for travelers in Colorado while stimulating our local and state economy. The Welcome Center Travel Counselors encourage visitors to lengthen their stay and increase their expenditures by providing accurate and helpful information to travelers about tourism-related activities throughout the state. Because of their importance to our overall Transportation System and the service they provide travelers unfamiliar with the area, CDOT recognizes the need for Colorado Welcome Center guide signs on state Highways.

### Additional Criteria/Information:

All centers must have adequate signs approved by the CTO. CDOT has the responsibility for placement of all Colorado Welcome Center highway signs. The CTO must approve use of the term, "Colorado Welcome Center," for branding purposes such as retail, uniforms, or other signs. The official wording, "Colorado Welcome Center," shall be prominently displayed on the exterior of the Center. When identifying the Center, the term "Colorado Welcome Center at (name location)," shall be used. More information on the Colorado Welcome Centers can be found at <https://www.colorado.com/official-colorado-welcome-centers>.

**CDOT will charge each new center directly for costs related to highway sign fabrication, installation and maintenance.** CDOT shall use the existing interagency process to bill Tourism. Whoever initiates the sign request on behalf of the Tourism office will provide information about whom to bill. All other directional signs are also the responsibility of the new center.

### Example Signs:



(Interstate/Freeway)



(Conventional State Highway)

## EMERGENCY MEDICAL CLINICS

### Policy:

**Interstates/Freeways/Conventional (Other) State Highways:** Only those emergency medical clinics staffed 24 hours per day may be signed. Private practices are not eligible for signing. Eligible facilities must be within five miles of Interstates/Freeways and Conventional (Other) state highways and approved by the Colorado Department of Health. A person in responsible charge of the facility must provide written documentation that the facility meets these signing criteria, and the CDOT region involved will verify that the facility qualifies. Where a qualifying hospital and an emergency medical clinic both exist, only the hospital shall be signed using the criteria for signing Hospitals listed under **GENERAL TRAVELER SERVICES** on page 11.

### Background:

Travelers are sometimes faced with medical emergencies. Many communities have 911 telephone service and provide emergency response in a variety of ways that accommodate the traveler's emergency needs. Emergency medical services signs are used to identify emergency medical clinics, such as qualified hospitals, ambulance stations, and qualified free-standing emergency medical treatment centers.

### Additional Criteria/Information:

At a minimum, signed facilities shall have a registered nurse on duty with a physician on call 24 hours per day. Facility names are not permitted on the signs (see allowed sign formats below). Any necessary trail-blazer signing should be provided and installed by the appropriate road authority.

### Example Signs:



(Interstate/Freeway)



(Conventional State Highway)

## GENERAL TRAVELER SERVICES

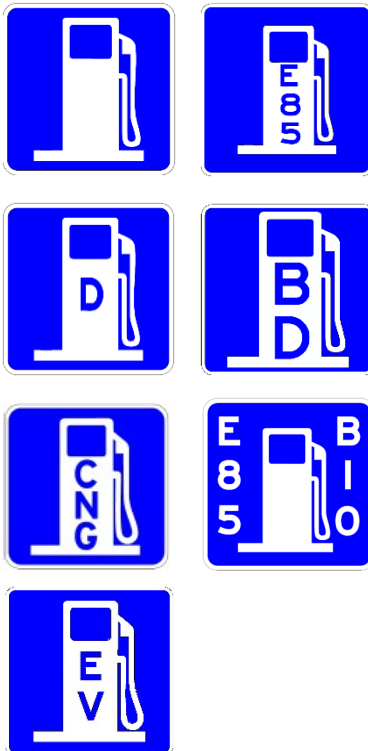
### Policy:

#### Interstates and Freeways:

Due to great travel distances between services in rural areas, signing for services meeting the criteria below is encouraged to provide information to travelers that will allow them to plan their stops safely and efficiently.

To qualify for signing, the traveler service must be located within three miles of the interchange. In addition, a telephone must be available for public use (this requirement may be waived if a public telephone is otherwise available in the vicinity of the interchange). Along with the above, specific traveler services must also meet the following criteria:

#### Gas/Diesel/LP-Gas/E-Gas/DC Fast-Charging:



Service must be available a minimum of 12 hours per day, seven days per week. Service must also have a public restroom and drinking water. In the case of EV Fast-Charging service, demonstrating access to at least two locations with these services within a safe, 5-minute walking distance may be substituted for on-site facilities.

Mainline and ramp signing is to be provided on Interstate highways and other full freeways for any station offering E85, Biodiesel alternative fuels, and/or EV Fast-Charging services. The station must be within one mile in urban and three miles in rural areas. The signs are not to be installed unless the availability of the fuel/charging service is clearly displayed at the participating station, and the station is on the state's Approved Biofuel Station list or has been verified to meet the minimum signing criteria identified on the Station Verification Form for EV Fast-Charging Stations. The state's Approved Biofuel Station list can be found at: <https://e85vehicles.com/e85-colorado.htm>. The station must also be on the crossroad or readily visible from the crossroad to qualify, unless it has existing trailblazer signs. No trailblazer signs are to be installed specifically for this program.

Alternative fuel signs are also available through the CDOT LOGOS program (see page 44). There are nine allowable supplemental panel messages:

- 24-Hours
- Diesel
- E-85
- Closed "*name of day*"
- Auto repair
- Natural Gas
- Propane
- Drive Thru
- RV Access



**General Traveler Service**

**Description**

**FOOD:**



This service defines restaurant-type facilities serving three meals per day, seven days per week. Service must also have a public restroom and phone.

**LODGING:**



Facility must be open seven days per week, provide adequate sleeping accommodations with a minimum of 50 rooms, and a public phone.

**CAMPING:**



Facility must be open seven days per week and provide drinking water, modern sanitary facilities and a public phone. Seasonal campgrounds must be open at least five months per year. Plaques mounted below the symbol will indicate whether the campground can accommodate RVs and the months of operation.

**TOURIST INFO:**



The facility may be operated by either a non-profit organization or a private enterprise whose primary purpose is the dissemination of tourist information. While staffing is not required, the available information must cover local, regional and statewide tourism activities. The facility should be within one mile of the highway and, if staffed, be open a minimum of eight hours per day, seven days per week between Memorial Day and Labor Day. When a facility is operated on a seasonal basis, a plaque mounted below the symbol will indicate the months of operation.

**HOSPITAL:**



Emergency Room Physician(s) must be available 24 hours per day, seven days per week, to address a wide variety of medical emergencies. The facility must be approved by the Colorado Department of Health.

**PHONE:**



Signing for a public telephone may be provided only if the phone is accessible 24 hours per day, seven days per week and the signing is not redundant, given that a public telephone is present in any facility also signed under this section.

**General Traveler Service**

**Description**

**24-HR PHARMACIES:**



Signing for a state-licensed 24-hour pharmacy service shall only be used to indicate the availability of a pharmacy with a licensed pharmacist on duty that is open 24 hours per day, seven days per week, and that is located within three miles of an interchange.

**Conventional (Other) State Highways**

Services are generally located within sight of the highway and therefore do not require signing (currently, an exception is being made for alternative fuel signing). Traveler services signing may be installed if an investigation establishes a need for a particular sign (for example, the service is not readily visible from the highway in advance of the access to the service). Signing criteria are otherwise the same as for Interstates and Freeways above.

**Background:**

Signs in these series direct interstate and intrastate travelers unfamiliar with an area to services commonly needed during the course of a trip. In accordance with **MUTCD** Chapter 2I, these services are restricted to: **GAS, DIESEL, LP-GAS, EV Fast-Charging, FOOD, LODGING, CAMPING, TOURIST INFORMATION, HOSPITAL, 24-HR PHARMACIES** and **PHONE**.

In urban areas, it is assumed that traveler services (with the exception of **CAMPING, TOURIST INFORMATION** and **HOSPITALS**) are commonly available and that it is neither necessary nor appropriate to provide signing for them. As such, only **CAMPING, TOURIST INFORMATION** or **HOSPITALS** may be signed in urban areas.

The signing criteria are based principally upon the number of hours during the day that the particular service is available. Since directional signing for these services is visible at all times, it is important that the services be available for the majority of the day.

**Additional Criteria/Information:**

Symbol signs, rather than word messages, shall be used for the traveler services described in this section. Typical sign sizes are as follows: 24" x 24" on state highways and 30" x 30" on interstate highways. Any necessary trail-blazer signing should be provided and installed by the appropriate road authority. When a service is operated on a seasonal basis, a plaque mounted below the symbol will indicate the months of operation.

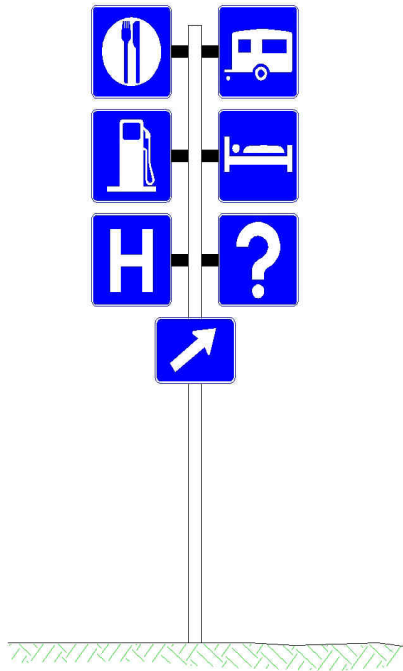
On rural highways, some of the traveler services described above may be eligible for signing under either the "Specific Business Signs" program (Interstate Highways) or the "Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs" program (Conventional State Highways). Under these programs, each participating business pays for special directional signing that identifies the business by name (see page 44 for more information).



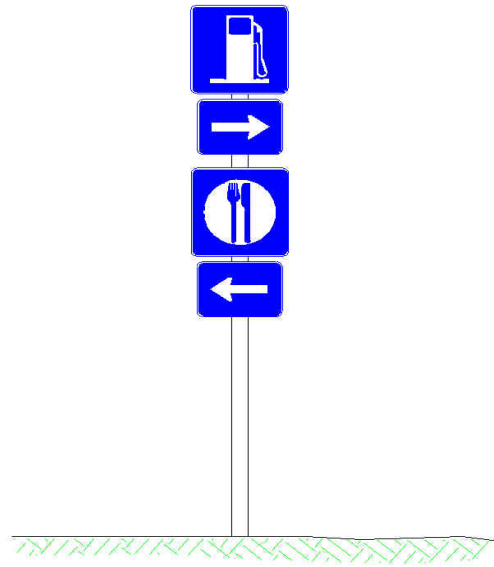
To obtain a Biofuel sign for your gas station, please contact the state's Biofuels & Local Fuels Program Manager Governor's Energy Office at (303) 866-2308.

Copies of the rules and regulations pertaining to these programs are available from CDOT. If you are interested in obtaining General Traveler Service signs, please contact the appropriate Region Traffic Engineer (see page 5 for contact info).

**Example Signs:**



(Interstate/Freeway)



(Conventional State Highway)

## GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND FACILITIES

### Policy:

#### Interstates and Freeways:

Signing is not permitted.

#### Conventional (Other) State Highways:

Signing for government-owned and operated services and facilities is permitted on state highways at the intersection with the local street or road most commonly used to access the service or facility.

### Background:

City/town, county, state and federal governments provide a variety of valuable services and facilities of interest to travelers, such as police and fire protection, parks, landfills, Department of Motor Vehicles, post offices, public golf courses and libraries. Local governments are encouraged to take a comprehensive planning approach to signing services and facilities for purposes of consistency and to avoid a “patchwork” system of signing.

### Additional Criteria/Information:

Signing should not conflict with existing CDOT signing and must be approved in writing by the appropriate Region. Signing for such government-owned and operated services and facilities that do not otherwise meet the criteria for traffic generators (e.g. bus stops) is permitted on conventional highways when the signing meets CDOT’s design and installation standards and is provided, installed and maintained by the requesting governmental entity at no cost to CDOT.

### Example Signs:



## MUSEUMS

### Policy:

#### Interstates and Freeways:

In rural areas, signing may be provided for museums located within 10 miles of an interchange. These museums shall be open to the public a minimum of six hours per day, six days per week, year round, in which works of artistic, historical, or scientific value are cared for and exhibited to the public. The museum must attest that its minimum annual attendance is 20,000 persons. Museums in urban areas shall not be signed.

#### Conventional (Other) State Highways:

In rural areas, signing may be provided for museums located within five miles of a state highway (within one mile of a state highway in urban areas). These museums shall be open a minimum of four hours per day, five days per week, and 90 days per year in which works of artistic, historical, or scientific value are cared for and exhibited to the public. Signing for qualified museums will be provided at the intersection with the local street or road most commonly used to access the museum.

### Background:

Colorado's many museums are an important cultural resource of interest to residents and tourists alike. To help Colorado communities and local historical societies preserve our history and cultural heritage, CDOT provides "Museum" signing.

### Additional Criteria/Information:

Museums must be operated by a non-profit organization to qualify for highway signing. Museum types can be added to the sign (e.g. car, western, wax, railroad), but specific museum names shall not be listed. When a museum operates on a seasonal basis, a plaque mounted below the museum sign will indicate the months of operation. Non-compliance could result in the permanent removal of the signing by CDOT. Any necessary trail-blazer signing should be provided and installed by the appropriate road authority

### Example Signs:



(Interstate/Freeway)



(Conventional State Highway)

## STATE MONUMENTS

### **Policy:**

#### **Interstates and Freeways:**

Signing shall be provided only at the interchange most commonly used to access a State Historical Monument that is within 20 miles of the interchange. In rural areas, this distance may be increased one mile for every 10,000 annual visitors over 100,000 up to a maximum distance of 50 miles from the interchange. In urban areas, the distance may be increased by one mile for every 20,000 annual visitors over 200,000 up to a maximum distance of 25 miles.

#### **Conventional (Other) State Highways:**

Signing shall be provided only at the intersection with the local street or road most commonly used to access a State Historical Monument that is within twenty miles of the intersection in rural areas or within 10 miles of the intersection in urban areas. In rural areas, the distance may be increased one mile for every 10,000 annual visitors over 1000,000 up to a maximum distance of 50 miles.

### **Background:**

Colorado's State Monuments make people a part of Colorado's story by engaging, connecting, and inspiring with the stories, places, and cultures of Colorado's exciting history.

### **Additional Criteria/Information:**

Property must be defined by statute.

State Monument, (CRS 24-80-410) "The governor of the state of Colorado is hereby authorized, upon recommendation of the society and approval of both the state agency having jurisdiction over the same and the county or municipality within which the same are located, to declare by public proclamation that any particular historic and prehistoric or archaeological structures, deposits, sites, and other objects of scientific or historic interest that are situated upon lands owned by the state of Colorado shall be state monuments, and he may designate as part thereof such state-owned parcels of land as he may deem necessary for the proper access, care, and management of the objects so designated."

State Historical Monument (CRS 24-80-501) "...historical sites and structures as may from time to time be acquired by the state historical society on behalf of the state of Colorado are hereby declared state historical monuments."

A list of the state monuments can be viewed online at: <https://www.historycolorado.org/state-historic-monuments>.

## NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

### Policy:

#### Interstates and Freeways:

Signing for designated National Historic Districts may be placed only at the point(s) where the District boundary crosses the highway. Tourist attraction logo signs may be used and are also available through the CDOT LOGOS program (see page 44 for more information).

#### Conventional (Other) State Highways:

Signing for designated National Historic Districts may be placed at the point(s) where the District boundary crosses the highway. If the District boundary does not cross the highway, directional signing to a District located within five miles of the highway may be placed on the highway at the intersection most commonly used to access the District.

### Background:

National Historic Districts shall be limited to a structure or site that is of definite historical significance as designated by the National Park Service, and the National and Colorado Historical Societies. The Colorado Historical Society and CDOT have jointly developed a list of National Historic Districts that are eligible for signing. The list can be viewed online at: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm>. In addition, certain National Historic Districts are listed as part of the Tourist Oriented Directional Signs (TODS) program (see page 44 for more information).

### Additional Criteria/Information:

More than half of the National Historic Districts are privately owned. The National Historic District program relies on suggestions for new designations from the National Park Service, which also assists in maintaining these landmarks. The criteria for designating a National Historic District landmark can be viewed on the following website:

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm>.

### Example Signs:



(Interstate/Freeway)



(Conventional State Highway)

## POINTS OF INTEREST

### **Policy:**

The site must be listed on the Colorado list of historic markers before it can be approved for signing by the Region Traffic Engineer.

The location of monuments shall be outside the clear zone of the highway, have adequate parking (the amount determined on a case-by-case basis), and meet the state's access code for ingress and egress. There shall be a minimum of four automobile parking spaces, and one RV parking space. The state access code can be found at:

[https://www.codot.gov/business/permits/accesspermits/references/601\\_1\\_accesscode\\_march2002\\_.pdf/view](https://www.codot.gov/business/permits/accesspermits/references/601_1_accesscode_march2002_.pdf/view).

### **Interstates and Freeways:**

Historic signs and monuments are placed only in rest areas or at designated overlooks. Rest Areas are signed as such without reference to "Point of Interest". Overlooks are typically signed "Scenic Overlook" or "Scenic Area". However, in lieu of such messages, they may be signed as "Point of Interest". Signing for points of interest located outside the Interstate or Freeway right-of-way is not permitted.

### **Conventional (Other) State Highways:**

Signing is permitted for a "Point of Interest" which is located immediately adjacent to the highway.

### **Background:**

The purpose of "Point of Interest" signing is to identify historical sites and monuments immediately adjacent to the highway.

Colorado Historic Society (CHS) wanted to develop new roadside interpretive exhibits that illuminated previously unaddressed themes, including agriculture and ranching, economics and labor, education, environment, immigration, race and ethnicity, exploration, fur trade, Hispanic/Chicano history, historic buildings and sites, Indian-white conflict, literature and the arts, military life, mining, native peoples, natural history, place names, recreation, religion, social life, Spanish/Mexican borderlands, technology and science, trails and transportation, urban life, water, and women's history

CHS also wanted to create interpretive signs to address more twentieth century themes, including: The Great Depression and Dust Bowl, the Civilian Conservation Corps, sugar beet farming and labor, ranching and farming, transportation changes (including road, highway construction), Indian policy, rural electrification, WWII, dams and irrigation, mining and environmental issues, urban and suburban development, race and ethnicity, and women's history.

Beyond these topics, CHS also wanted to make a connection between local events and a wider national context. So, markers were created on topics as diverse as the Cheyenne Dog Soldiers (Holyoke), Rocky Flats (Broomfield), Pinto Bean Cultivation (Dove Creek), and the Petticoat Government (Grover).

In addition, "Point of Interest" signing may be used to identify geological features of interest to the general public.

### Additional Criteria/Information:

The sites are selected based on the historical significance of the site. The current lists of sites in the Colorado historic marker programs can be found at:

<https://www.historycolorado.org/colorados-national-historic-sites-and-monuments>.

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 provides the following criteria for historical significance:

The quality of significance to American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and:

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history; and
- E. Achieved significance 50 or more years ago.

If you have suggestions for a proposed historic Points of Interests site, contact the Colorado Historical Society at: <https://www.historycolorado.org>, and send the suggestion form to the appropriate Region Traffic Engineer for consideration.

### Example Signs:



(Interstate/Freeway)



(Conventional State Highway)

## POLITICAL BOUNDARY/IDENTIFICATION

### Policy:

**Interstates/Freeways/Conventional (Other) State Highways:** There are four types of political boundary/identification signs available for use on all state highways, and one identification plaque available for use on interstates and freeways. Only Type 1 signs will be allowed at the boundaries of those communities that install Type 3 or Type 4 signs away from their boundaries.

The location of an existing traffic control device, or the need for a new device, shall take precedence over the location of a political boundary/identification sign, either existing or proposed.

Relocation and/or removal of sign(s) as a result of highway improvements projects, such as roadway widening, shall be the responsibility of the local government. Signs not relocated by the entity shall be removed by CDOT, and the entity shall be billed accordingly.

Signs shall be placed outside the clear zone unless the sign is of a breakaway design or placed behind guardrail. Final locations of signs shall be determined by CDOT with input from the entity. For safety reasons, signs shall not be located in the median of a freeway or expressway except in areas where roadways are divided by parks or extremely wide open areas (100+ feet). Sign supports shall be of approved breakaway design unless protected by guardrail as required by AASHTO "Guide for Selecting, Locating and Designing Traffic Barriers." The lease or license requirements of CDOT shall be satisfied before customized signs may be installed.

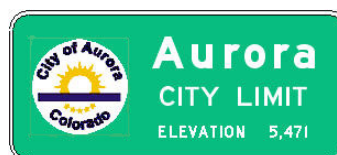
**TYPE 1** signs are the commonly used boundary signs described in Section 2H.02 of the 2009 **MUTCD** and provided/maintained by CDOT:

### Example TYPE 1 Signs:



**TYPE 2** signs are identical to **TYPE 1** signs in design with the addition of an official "logo" and/or "slogan". At the request of the local government, CDOT will permit the installation of **TYPE 2** signs in lieu of **TYPE 1** signs. **TYPE 2** signs will be provided and maintained by the local government and must meet CDOT standards for design and mounting.

### Example TYPE 2 Signs:



**TYPE 3** signs are the "decorative" political boundary/identification signs provided by local governments and installed within the CDOT right of way. In general, **TYPE 3** signs must be designed in good taste, sponsored by a local government, accompanied by a resolution from the local governing body, and adhere to the guidelines shown in Table 1 on page 23.



If located within the “clear zone”, mounting must be located behind guardrail and meet CDOT breakaway sign standards. Otherwise, the sign must be located outside the “clear zone” so as to not present a collision hazard to errant vehicles. **TYPE 3** signs are provided, installed, powered, and maintained by the local government at no cost to CDOT. **TYPE 3** signs are placed in lieu of standard **TYPE 1** signs except in those circumstances where a **TYPE 3** sign is constructed a substantial distance from the actual political boundary.

**Example TYPE 3 Signs:**



**TYPE 4** signs are the “monument-like” political boundary/identification markers provided by local governments and installed within CDOT right of way.

Installation of **TYPE 4** signs precludes the installation of boundary signs outside the right-of-way. If the entity has an “official sign”, this precludes installation of **TYPE 4** signs.

In general, **TYPE 4** signs must be designed in good taste sponsored by a local government, accompanied by a resolution from the local governing body, and adhere to the guidelines shown in **Table 1** on page 23.

**Example TYPE 4 Signs:**



The guidelines for **TYPE 3** and **TYPE 4** signs are shown below in **Table 1**:

**Table 1**

<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Type 3</b>	<b>Type 4</b>
All sign requests must be in writing to Region Traffic Engineer (or Designee).	■	■
The sign layout shall consist of four sets of detailed plans showing sign face, post(s) [if applicable], lettering, construction details, dimensions (including distance from edge of paved shoulder, location and colors, etc.). The four sets of the sign layout and the sign location (with dimensions shown from the edge of asphalt), along with a permit application, shall be submitted to CDOT for review and comment.	■	■
All locations of the signing shall be determined by CDOT with input from the entity. Final locations of the signs shall be determined by CDOT so that the signs are outside the clear zone, unless the sign is located behind guardrail.	■	■
One boundary sign shall be placed in each direction of each state highway that crosses the boundary of the entity on the right-hand side of the roadway it faces.	■	■
The signs shall be located within ¼ mile of the entity's boundary, and the first intersection/interchange encountered after passing the sign must lead to that entity.		■
Maximum area of the sign face.	32 SF	150 SF
No commercial logos or advertising is allowed on the signs or support, including acknowledgements or sponsorship.	■	■
No personal acknowledgements to the mayor, councilors, etc. are allowed on signs or supports.	■	■
Signs shall include neutral colors only and no part of the sign shall have the appearance of existing traffic control devices.	■	■
Signs to be erected on 4"X4" wooden post(s), maximum, coated with oil-based enamel paint.	■	
All sign posts shall be directly buried 36 inches into the ground, but not in concrete.	■	
Bottom of sign shall be set at minimum height of 18 inches above ground.	■	
Sign lighting shall be a white source 3000K Correlated Colorado Temperature or less. A light aimed upwards shall have less than 3,200 initial luminaire lumens. A light with 3,200 initial luminaire lumens shall be aimed downwards and have a maximum upright rating of U0. Refer to CDOT Lighting Design Guidelines Sign Lighting Section for more information.	■	■
All installation, power service, and maintenance of signs shall be performed by the local entity. A minimum radius of 20 feet around the sign and surrounding area shall also be maintained (grass-mowed, etc.) by the local entity.	■	■
All electrical lines shall be direct burial	■	■
Signs shall be officially authorized by local ordinance or resolution.	■	■
Any future relocation and/or removal of the signs and power due to roadway improvements shall be the responsibility of the entity.	■	■
No access from interstate/freeway will be allowed for installation	■	■

**Background:**

Signing for incorporated city and town boundaries and county lines is provided in both rural and urban areas principally as a means of identifying changes in responsibility for certain governmental-related activities, such as law enforcement and emergency response. Secondly, such signing provides travelers with destination information concerning Colorado's major cities and towns.

In rural areas, “boundary” signing for unincorporated towns may be appropriate to supplement otherwise necessary directional signing and indicate to interstate/intrastate travelers that they have reached an intermediate destination. To qualify for “boundary” signing, unincorporated rural towns must have an official United States Post Office and be designated on an official state map published by CDOT.

In urban areas, the large number of unincorporated subdivisions, housing developments and business “parks” makes it impossible to provide signing for all such areas. Additionally, in urban areas, interchanges and intersections are identified by cross-street names as this information is significantly more useful to travelers given the large number of potential destinations. Boundary signing for unincorporated places in urban areas provides little information to travelers and as such, shall not be installed. Typically, subdivisions, housing developments and business “parks” are identified by on premise signing provided by the developer and installed in accordance with state and federal outdoor advertising rules and regulations. Information pertaining to on premise identification signing is available from the CDOT Outdoor Advertising Manager.

## DESTINATION AND DISTANCE SIGNS

### Policy:

#### Interstates/Freeways/Conventional (Other) State Highways:

Destination and distance signing for cities and towns at intersections and interchanges should be provided under the guidelines set forth in the 2009 MUTCD under Sections 2D.36 - 2D.42 for conventional (other) state highways or Section 2E.35 – 2E.52 for freeways and expressways.

To be eligible for signing at an intersection/interchange, both CDOT and the affected city/town must agree that the intersection/interchange is a major access to the city/town. Given that the intersection/interchange is a major access, first priority for inclusion on the sign should be given to cities/towns immediately adjacent to the intersection/interchange. Secondary priority for inclusion on the sign should be given to cities/towns, whose corporate limits are within five miles of the intersection/interchange, again assuming agreement that the surface street is a major access to the city/town.

#### Additional Criteria/Information:

Supplemental signing for cities and towns at intersections/interchanges may be provided using a Type 2 Supplemental signing system similar to the method used to sign for General Traveler Services (see below for example signing). These signs are typically 24" x 24" on conventional state highways and 30" x 30" on interstate highways, and bear the city or town logo and/or name. While a ground-mounted supplemental guide sign is limited to two destination names, the Type 2 Supplemental signing approach allows for as many as six cities/towns to be signed at a single location. In addition, destination and distance signing for cities/towns will be possible at many more interchanges as this design requires less space between signs than the typical ground-mounted supplemental guide signs.

Qualifying cities/towns must provide the Type 2 Supplemental sign panels to CDOT for installation along the freeway, expressway or conventional state highway mainline, along with any Type 2 Supplemental sign panels necessary for installation on the exit ramps.

Existing ground-mounted supplemental guide signs bearing city or town names may remain in place until their useful service life is reached, when damaged, or at the discretion of the Region Traffic Engineer, whichever is earlier. At that time, replacement signing should be reviewed under this approach. Existing ground-mounted supplemental signs may be replaced with a Type 2 Supplemental sign panel sooner, should a qualifying city or town desire to do so.

#### Example Destination/Distance and TYPE 2 Supplemental Signs:



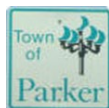
(Destination and Distance)



Ground-Mounted Supplemental  
(Conventional State Highway)



Ground-Mounted Supplemental  
(Interstate/Freeways)



(Type 2 Supplemental)



(Type 2 Supplemental)

## COMMUNITY WAYFINDING SIGNS

### Policy:

#### Interstates/Freeways:

Signing is not permitted.

#### Conventional (Other) State Highways:

The following Community Wayfinding Sign guidelines are required from Section 2D.50 of the 2009 MUTCD. This does not alleviate all other requirements as outlined in the MUTCD, but instead provides an emphasis on certain statements.

1. Community wayfinding guide signs shall not be used to provide direction to primary destinations or highway routes or streets.
2. The standard colors of red, orange, purple, or florescent versions thereof, fluorescent yellow-green, and florescent pink shall not be used as background colors for community wayfinding guide signs.
3. All messages, borders, legends, and backgrounds of community wayfinding guide signs and any identification enhancement markers shall be retroreflective.
4. Community wayfinding guide signs should be limited to three destinations per sign.
5. The lettering for destinations on community wayfinding guide signs shall be a combination of lower-case letters with initial upper-case letters.
6. Except for signs that are intended to be viewed only by pedestrians, bicyclists stopped out of the flow of traffic, or occupants of parked vehicles, Internet and e-mail address, including domain names and uniform resource locators (URL), shall not be displayed on any community wayfinding guide sign or sign assembly.
7. Wayfinding signs designed for and intended to provide direction to pedestrians, bicyclists or other users of a sidewalk or other roadside area should be located to minimize their conspicuity to vehicular traffic. These signs should not be retroreflective.
8. If a pictograph is used, its height shall not exceed two times the height of the upper-case letters of the principle legend on the sign.
9. Except for pictographs, symbols that are not approved in the MUTCD for use on guide signs shall not be used on community wayfinding guide signs.
10. Business logos, commercial graphics, or other forms of advertising (see MUTCD Section 1A.01) shall not be used on community wayfinding guide signs or sign assemblies.

The following guidelines are provided in addition to the requirements above:

1. General language (i.e. Recreation Center) should be used over specific destination names.
2. "Historic" shall only be used if the destination is listed on the National or State historic register.
3. Font size shall be legible for expected conditions. The minimum font sizes are shown below in Table 2:

**Table 2**

Posted Speed Limit	Text	Symbol
25 mph	4" minimum	8" minimum
35 mph	5" minimum	12" minimum
< 35 mph	6" minimum	18" minimum

4. Destinations shall be listed from top to bottom of the community wayfinding guide sign as follows:
  - a. Order by distance: closest to furthest.
  - b. Order by direction: straight ahead, to the left, and to the right
5. Destinations shall only be listed once per direction, in which, should be at the intersection with the local street or access most commonly used to access the destination.
6. All community wayfinding guide signs shall be one consistent style.
7. All signs shall have a minimum of 7-feet from grade of road (7-feet, six inches if a sidewalk or pedestrian is likely) to the bottom of the sign panel.
8. Relevant lateral and horizontal sign placement shall meet requirements as outlined in CDOT's S-614-1 'Ground Sign Placement' Safety Standard.
9. Signs shall not block sight distance.
10. Signs shall not prohibit the installation of regulatory, warning, and other guide signs, which have priority over community wayfinding guide signs.
11. Signs installed in the clear zone of state owned right-of-way shall be mounted on MASH or NCHRP 350 compliant breakaway bases. If a CDOT standard base is not used, an acceptance letter from FHWA, showing device compliance, must be submitted.
12. Standard highway signs displaying similar information shall be removed.

**Background:**

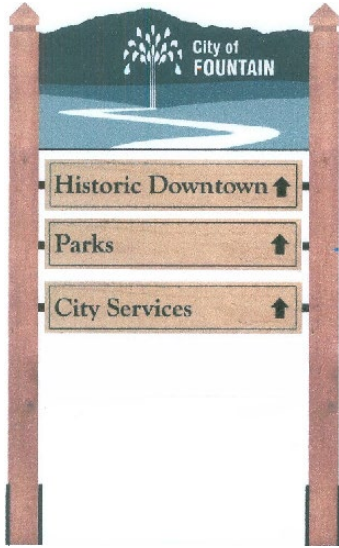
Local jurisdictions sometimes develop their own coordinated and continuous system of signs for a community wayfinding program that directs tourists and other road users to key civic, cultural, visitor, and recreational attractions, and other destinations within a city or a local urbanized or downtown area.

Community wayfinding guide signs are a type of destination guide sign for conventional roads with a common color and/or identification enhancement marker for destinations within an overall wayfinding guide sign plan for an area.

**Additional Criteria/Information:**

Construction details, location information, sign design (in color) and wording shall be submitted to the appropriate CDOT Region Traffic Engineer for initial review and approval prior to fabricating the sign. If approved, a Special Use Permit must be obtained prior to construction. Go to <https://www.codot.gov/business/permits/utilitiesspecialuse> for more information regarding Special Use Permits. Signs installed shall be the sole responsibility of the entity installing the signs.

**Example Community Way Finding Sign:**





## RADIO INFORMATION

### Policy:

#### Signing for Commercial AM/FM Radio on Rural Interstates/Freeways/ Conventional (Other) State Highways:

To qualify for signing, commercial radio stations must broadcast periodic weather and road condition/traffic information of value to travelers. During periods of adverse weather, such information shall be broadcast at intervals not exceeding 30 minutes. The station must broadcast a minimum of 16 hours per day, seven days per week and have a signal strength adequate to serve at least 40 miles of the highway. A maximum of four frequencies shall be shown on the sign, and signs shall be spaced a minimum of 20 miles apart. There shall also be a documented agreement between CDOT and the commercial radio stations.

#### Signing for Highway Advisory Radio (HAR) on Interstates/Freeways/Conventional (Other) State Highways:

Signing for HAR stations may be provided only when the stations are operated by a government agency or government-affiliated agency. The station must broadcast a minimum of 16 hours per day, seven days per week (exceptions may be made for those HAR stations that are used to broadcast emergency information only). Due to the low power of such broadcasts, messages must be structured so that motorists may receive at least two repetitions of the message while traveling through the broadcast zone. Typical information for broadcast includes (but is not limited to) road, weather and traffic conditions; road construction information; parking availability; seasonal activities; information concerning wildlife, cultural history or local geology; emergency information; civic or special events; and local tourist information. There shall also be a documented agreement between CDOT and the HAR stations.

While the typical sign message for HAR broadcasts reads “**TRAVELERS/INFORMATION/ TUNE RADIO TO/(frequency)**”, the sign legend may be modified to better represent the type of information being broadcast; e.g., “**PARKING/INFORMATION/TUNE RADIO TO/ (frequency)**”.

### Background:

Signing may be provided for two distinctly different types of radio broadcasts due to the value the information has to motorists. Commercial AM and FM radio stations can broadcast road, weather and general traffic information useful to motorists traveling through rural areas. Highway Advisory Radio (HAR) uses various frequencies to broadcast a wide variety of non-commercial information. Both forms of radio communication provide valuable information to travelers.

### Example Signs:



## 511 SERVICES

### Policy:

#### Interstates and Freeways:

Signing for 511 services shall be located to provide maximum coverage to major user groups such as tourists, and commercial vehicles. Specifically, these signs shall be located just inside the Colorado state line entrance alongside all state interstates, freeways and highways.

#### Conventional (Other) State Highways:

Signing for 511 services will be provided at the intersection with local street or road most commonly used to access into the State of Colorado.

### Background:

On March 8, 1999, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) petitioned the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to designate a nationwide three-digit telephone number for travel information. On July 21, 2000, the FCC designated 511 as the national travel information number. 511 is an abbreviated three-digit dialing code to access traveler information. It is a customer-driven, multi-modal travel information service, available across the United States, accessed via telephones and other personal communications devices, realized through locally deployed interoperable systems, enabling a safer, more reliable and efficient transportation system. The types of basic information available through dialing 511 include roadway conditions, available transit services and weather. Expanded travelers' information can be offered in the future.

### Example Sign:



## SKI AREAS

### Policy:

#### Interstates and Freeways:

Signing shall be installed only at the interchange most commonly used to access the ski area. The area must be within 50 miles of the interchange to be signed. Appropriate ramp signing must also be installed.

To qualify for signing in an urban area, the ski area must exhibit an annual attendance of at least 65,000 persons. For signing in rural areas, the minimum annual attendance figure is 40,000 persons.

#### Conventional (Other) State Highways:

Signing shall be installed at the intersection most commonly used to access the ski area.

To qualify for signing in an urban area, the ski area must exhibit an annual attendance of at least 65,000 persons. For signing in rural areas, the minimum annual attendance figure is 40,000 persons.

### Background:

Colorado enjoys an international reputation for the quality of its skiing and ski areas. Signing for those areas providing downhill and/or cross-country skiing and open seven days per week during ski season may be installed.

### Additional Criteria/Information:

Any necessary trail-blazer signing should be provided and installed by the appropriate road authority.

### Example Signs:



(Interstate/Freeway)



(Conventional State Highway)

## SPECIAL MOUNTAIN PEAKS

### Policy:

#### Interstates and Freeways:

Outside city/town limits, mountain peaks over 14,000 feet in elevation and other dominant mountain peaks of special significance may be identified by signing. The peak must be clearly visible and easily distinguishable from the location where the sign is to be placed; preference should be given to locations where an adequate shoulder or pull-off area exists adjacent to the roadway.

#### Conventional (Other) State Highways:

Signing for qualified mountain peaks will be provided at the intersection with the local street or road most commonly used to access the special mountain peaks.

### Background:

Colorado gains much of its international fame from its mountains. Annually, millions of visitors come to Colorado to participate in the many recreational and cultural opportunities and to enjoy the scenery. While Colorado has over 1,000 individual mountains that rise over 10,000 feet, it is “The Fourteeners” that are most “famous”. Due to the interest many visitors have in identifying these peaks, the peak signing approach has been developed.

### Additional Criteria/Information:

Peak elevations shall be referenced from the most recent Official List of Colorado Fourteeners provided by the United States Geological Survey (USGS).

### Example Signs:



(Interstate/Freeway)



(Conventional State Highway)

## **PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS**

### **Policy:**

#### **Interstates and Freeways:**

Signing shall be provided only at the interchange most commonly used to access Parks or Recreation Area (National Parks and monuments, State and National Wildlife Areas, National Grasslands, National Historic Sites, Wetlands, and significant local parks in the recreation areas) that is within 20 miles of the interchange. In rural areas, this distance may be increased one mile for each 10,000 annual visitors over 100,000 up to a maximum distance of 60 miles from the interchange. In urban areas, the distance may be increased by one mile for each 20,000 annual visitors over 200,000 up to a maximum distance of 25 miles.

Additional signing for specific park activities will normally be limited to six activities; camping, fishing, swimming, target shooting, boating and picnic grounds. Signing for these activities must meet the following requirements:

1. The state highway to be signed must run through the park and be the major road within the park.
2. The activity to be signed must be unique to specific entrances and not common to all entrances.
3. The facilities of the specific park activity to be signed must meet the requirement of CDOT Policy Directives 1500.0 and 1503.0 to warrant this additional signing. These policy directives can be found by contacting CDOT's Office of Policy and Government Relations at (303) 757-9077.

These activities will be signed by adding the international symbol plaque to the post directly beneath the entrance sign. Such plaques shall not in any way interfere with the break-away design of the sign and posts.

Prohibitions will not be signed.

The applicable Region will make the final decision on signing.

#### **Conventional (Other) State Highways:**

Signing shall be provided only at the intersection with the local street or road most commonly used to access a Park or Recreation Area that has a minimum annual attendance of 15,000 and is within five miles of the intersection in rural areas, or within three miles of the intersection in urban areas. In rural areas, the distance may be increased one mile for each 10,000 annual visitors over 100,000 up to a maximum distance of 10 miles from the intersection.

### **Background:**

Colorado's many state Parks and Recreation Areas provide a wide variety of outdoor activities for Colorado residents and tourists alike. As a frequent destination for travelers, guide signing may be provided as indicated.

**Additional Criteria/Information:**

Any necessary trail-blazer signing should be provided and installed by the appropriate road authority.

**Example Signs:**



(Interstate/Freeway)



(Interstate/Freeway)



(Conventional State Highway)

## NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS

### Policy:

The trail must be designated by congress as a national historic trail before it can be approved for signing by the Region Traffic Engineer.

The location of monuments shall be outside the clear zone of the highway, have adequate parking (the amount determined on a case-by-case basis), and meet the state's access code for ingress and egress. There shall be a minimum of four automobile parking spaces and one RV parking space. The state access code can be found at:

[https://www.codot.gov/business/permits/accesspermits/references/601\\_1\\_accesscode\\_march2002\\_.pdf/view](https://www.codot.gov/business/permits/accesspermits/references/601_1_accesscode_march2002_.pdf/view).

### Interstates:

Signing is not permitted.

### US Highway/Conventional (Other) State Highways:

Segments of the historic trail which follows the roadway may be identified by placing National Historic Trail markers with the plaque "Next XX Miles" at designated locations as approved by the Region Traffic Engineer. These segments shall be defined as where a trail follows the roadway and continues the general path of the roadway as long as the trail is offset a mile or less laterally to the roadway.

Supplemental markers on a US State Highway are allowed only where an Interstate or US Highway intersects the established route segment to help identify the route to entering traffic. Supplemental markers on a Conventional (Other) State Highway are allowed only where an Interstate, US Highway, or Colorado Highway intersects the established route segment to help identify the route to entering traffic.

Signing which directs traffic (often includes an "Arrow" plaque) to a designated parking location is typically not permitted, except in those circumstances where significant physical improvements have been made. Designated parking areas shall be within one mile of the roadway for routes along a US Highway and within five miles for routes along a conventional Colorado Highway. All signing for these will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

### Background:

The purpose of "National Historic Trail" signing is to identify historical trails when they coincide with or cross roadways.

A National Historic Trail is a long-distance route that follows and commemorates a historic path of travel that changed the history and character of the U.S. Today, the route offers opportunities to visit surviving sites, trail segments, and defining places of history and learn about the diverse stories they tell.

National Historic Trails shall be limited to a trail that is of definite historical significance as designated by congress and the National Trails System can be viewed online at:

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationaltrailssystem/national-historic-trails.htm>.

**Additional Criteria/Information:**

Any necessary trail-blazer signing should be provided and installed by the appropriate road authority.

The installation of such signs are limited to the availability of funding from gifts, grants, or donations from private or public sources.

- Additional requirements are the responsibility of the body requesting signage.

**Example Signs:**





## WILDLIFE VIEWING

### Policy:

#### Interstates and Freeways:

Signing is typically not permitted, except in those circumstances where significant physical improvements have been made (e.g. the viewing site for Big Horn Sheep adjacent to I-70 at Georgetown). Requests for signing will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

#### Conventional (Other) State Highways:

Signing shall be provided only at the intersection with the local street or road most commonly used to access a viewing site that is within five miles of the intersection. Sites must include adequate parking and appropriate interpretive signing, and be listed in the Colorado Wildlife Viewing Guide or on the Colorado Division of Wildlife website at: <https://cpw.state.co.us/>, or at 6060 Broadway, Denver, CO 80216 (call 303-291-7227 for information). Accesses to viewing areas directly adjacent to state Highways must comply with the criteria set forth in the State Highway Access Code.

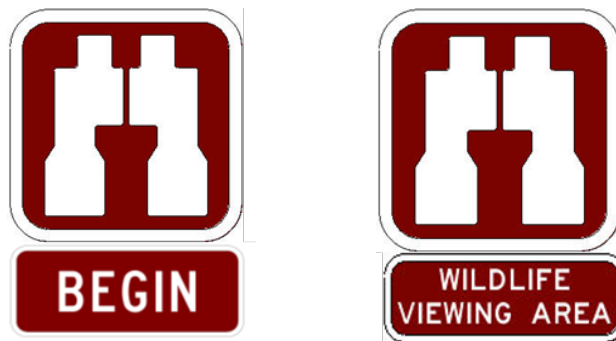
### Background:

Wildlife viewing areas have been identified by the Colorado Division of Wildlife under their "Wildlife Viewing" Program. Signing may be provided only for those locations that are approved by the Division of Wildlife and meet the criteria outlined.

### Additional Criteria/Information:

Any necessary trail-blazer signing should be provided and installed by the appropriate road authority.

### Example Signs:



## COLORADO BIRDING TRAIL

### Policy:

#### Interstates and Freeways:

Signing is not permitted.

#### Conventional (Other) State Highways:

Signing shall be provided only at the intersection with the local street or road most commonly used to access a birding trailhead that is within five miles of the intersection. Trailheads must include adequate parking and appropriate interpretive signing, and also must be listed in the Colorado Birding Trail Guide or on the Colorado Birding Trail (CBT) website at: [www.coloradobirdingtrail.com](http://www.coloradobirdingtrail.com).

### Background:

The CBT consists of a series of driving trails and loops designated on existing roadways that offers special opportunities to view birds and other wildlife. The CBT will be somewhat similar to the Scenic Byways program, as visitors will be directed along roadways by the CBT site identification signs.

The trail sites are featured on maps, brochures and the CBT web site at: [www.coloradobirdingtrail.com](http://www.coloradobirdingtrail.com).

### Additional Criteria/Information:

Any necessary trail-blazer signing should be provided and installed by the appropriate road authority.

### Example Sign:



## SCENIC BYWAYS

### **Policy:**

#### **Non-State Highways:**

For non-state highways intersecting with conventional state highways, place Scenic Byway markers with the name/logo of the scenic byway with directional arrow(s) plaque on non-state highways near the intersection with the Scenic Byway.

#### **Conventional State Highways:**

The Scenic Byway marker at the beginning or end of a route shall include “Begin” or “End” plaques, respectively. Prior to right angle turns of the scenic byway and intersections, place a Scenic Byway marker with a directional arrow. Prior to irregular turns of the scenic byways and T or Y intersections, place Scenic Byway marker with a directional arrow. After major intersections and county roads, add a Scenic Byway reassurance marker. The maximum distance between reassurance markers should be approximately five miles.

On approach roads to state highways designated as Scenic Byways, place a Scenic Byway marker with directional arrow(s) at major county road intersections where tourist traffic is likely to enter the state highway. Also, place a Scenic Byways marker with directional arrow(s) at all state highway intersections.

Interpretive signing shall only be installed in rest areas or overlooks and if agreed upon by the appropriate Region Traffic Engineer.

#### **Conventional State Highways, Local Streets or County Roads, intersecting with an Interstate Highway:**

A Scenic Byway marker with or without a name may be included on a supplemental interchange sign. Also, a Scenic Byway marker with or without a name is allowed on an Interstate mainline sign only when the Scenic Byway actually intersects the Interstate route.

### **Background:**

The Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways program is a statewide partnership intended to provide recreational, educational, and economic benefits to Coloradans and visitors. This system of outstanding touring routes in Colorado affords the traveler interpretation and identification of key points of interest and services while providing for the protection of significant resources.

The trail sites are featured on maps, brochures and at: <https://www.codot.gov/travel/scenic-byways>.

### **Additional Criteria/Information:**

Any necessary trail-blazer signing should be provided and installed by the appropriate road authority.

Example Signs:



## MEMORIAL HIGHWAYS

### Policy:

#### Interstates/Freeways/Conventional (Other) State Highways:

Following receipt of a confirmed resolution from the CDOT Transportation Commission, Traffic & Safety Engineering Services will contact representatives of the organization that initiated the public request for designation or memorializing of a section of highway, and request specific information related to their request. Issues such as desired sign design and size, and appropriate location will be discussed and agreed upon. The organization making the request will be informed of other limitations related to the naming. These include:

1. Signs should not appear on or along the highway, or be placed on bridges or other highway components unless no other alternatives are available. The requirement for signing should, when possible, be carried out by placing plaques in rest areas, scenic overlooks or other appropriate locations where parking is provided.
2. The signs should be inconspicuously located relative to vehicle operations, along the highway.
3. If placement of the signs or plaques off the main roadway is not practicable, the signs may be placed on the mainline provided that (1) they are independent of other guide and directional signing, and (2) they do not adversely compromise roadway safety, efficiency or traffic flow.
4. The number of signs shall be limited to one sign at an appropriate location in each direction with the allowance of additional signs at intersection locations. All signs will be funded by the requesting organization.
5. The name in the resolution or act shall not replace the official highway numeral designations.
6. The name in the resolution or act shall not appear on supplemental signs or any other informational sign either on or along the highway or its intersecting routes.
7. The use of route signs shall be restricted to signs officially used for guidance of traffic in accordance with the MUTCD.
8. No taxpayer dollars shall be spent on the manufacture or installation of these signs unless the resolution or act specifically states so.
9. A maintenance agreement between the organization and CDOT will be required unless the resolution or act specifically states that the maintenance is to be provided by CDOT.

Traffic & Safety Engineering Services Branch will have final approval authority regarding sign design, size and location.

### Background:

Upon approval by the Colorado General Assembly of an act or resolution to designate a component of the state highway either in honor of or in memory of an individual, group or event, the Transportation Commission shall confirm this naming by resolution. No taxpayer dollars shall be spent on the initial installation of these signs unless the act or resolution passed by either the

Colorado General Assembly or Transportation Commission specifically states that CDOT shall provide the signing.

**Additional Criteria/Information:**

Once agreement has been reached regarding the terms and conditions relating to the confirmed resolution, the Regions involved will be advised and requested to install the necessary signing.

The requesting organization may have the agreed upon signs fabricated through CDOT's Sign Shop and arrange for direct payment. Or, they may arrange to have the signs manufactured through a private sign shop using CDOT's standards and specifications.

The requesting organization shall not hold any celebrations at the sign installation site to minimize potential traffic congestion.

If the signs are fabricated by CDOT's Sign Shop, the terms of fabrication (cost and time) must be agreed to by the requesting organization and the Sign Shop Supervisor.

**Example Signs:**



## OTHER TRAFFIC GENERATORS

**Policy:**

Guide signing for other non-profit or publicly owned and/or operated facilities meeting the following criteria may be installed:

**Interstates and Freeways:**

Type of Generator	Criteria	Major Metro Area	Urban Area	Rural Area
<b>Colleges and Universities</b> (Including Private Institutions)	Total Enrollment (not including students taking online classes)	4000	2500	1500
	Distance from Interchange (mi.)	3	4	5
<b>Military Bases</b>	No. of Assigned Personnel	5000	4000	3000
<b>War Memorials</b>	Attendance	5000	4000	3000
<b>Military Bases/War Memorials</b>	Distance from Interchange (mi.)	5	7.5	10
	Annual Attendance	200,000	170,000	130,000
<b>Other Qualifying Destinations</b> (Arenas, Auditoriums, Business Districts, Convention Halls, and Downtown Areas)	No. of Seats (if applicable)	4000	3000	2000
	Distance from Interchange (mi.)	5	5	5

**Conventional (Other) State Highways:**

Criteria for signing colleges, universities and military bases are the same as set forth above. Signing for communities should be provided under the guidelines contained in Sections 2D.36, 2D.37, and 2D.40 through 2D.42 of the 2009 MUTCD. Signing for other qualifying destinations should be provided in accordance with the following:

Type of Generator	Criteria	Major Metro Area	Urban Area	Rural Area
<b>Other Qualifying Destinations</b> (Arenas, Auditoriums, Business Districts, Convention Halls, and Downtown Areas)	Minimum Number of Annual Visitors	125,000	50,000	12,500
	Distance from State Highway (mi.) <sup>1</sup>	1	1	1

Signs shall be installed at the state highway intersection with the local street or road most commonly used to access the facility or destination.

Facilities not specifically listed above or covered by a specific section of this policy document will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and the requirements shall be at the discretion of the Region Traffic Engineer.

In addition, traffic generators of the types listed below do not warrant signing regardless of the attendance criteria unless otherwise covered by a specific section of this policy document:

<sup>1</sup> The distance may be increased one (1) mile for each 10% over minimum number of annual visitors listed above, up to a maximum of 10 miles total distance.

Traffic Generators that Do Not Warrant Signing

- Arboretums
- Armories
- Arsenals
- Business Parks
- Cemeteries
- Church/Scout Camps
- Churches
- City and County Facilities
- Civil Defense Facilities
- Community Centers/Pools
- Driver’s License Centers
- Game Preserves
- Grade/High Schools
- Hazardous Waste Sites
- Humane Facilities
- Local Prisons or Jails
- Medical Facilities
- Power Plants
- Private Schools
- Recycle Centers
- Seminaries
- Shopping Centers
- Subdivisions
- Vocational/Trade School

**Background:**

Traffic generators, other than those specifically mentioned in this booklet, are considered to be those publicly owned and/or operated destinations or special points of interest operated by non-profit organizations that routinely attract a significant amount of traffic unfamiliar with the area. Commercial businesses shall not be signed, except for those eligible under either the “Specific Information Signs and Business Plaques” (LOGO) program (Interstates and Freeways) or the “Tourist Oriented Directional Signs” (TODS) program (Conventional State Highways).

**Additional Criteria/Information:**

The LOGO program provides identification of specific information and businesses, including gas, food, lodging, camping and attraction services. These businesses must meet specific conditions to participate in this program. The specific eligibility criteria can be found in The Specific Information Business Signs (LOGO) Program brochure or on the following Internet site:

<https://colorado.interstatelogos.com/state/>.

CDOT’s rules, regulations, and standards for the LOGO program can found at:

<https://www.codot.gov/business/rules>.

The TODS program provides business identification and directional information for tourist-oriented activities. These businesses must meet specific conditions to participate in this program. The specific eligibility criteria can be found in the Tourist Oriented Directional Sign brochure or at:

<https://coloradotods.interstatelogos.com/state/>.

CDOT’s rules and regulations for the erection, administration, and maintenance for the TODS program can be found at: <https://www.codot.gov/programs/signs/logos-tods.html>.

**Example Signs:**



(Interstate/Freeway)



(Conventional State Highway)



(Conventional State Highway)



## SPECIAL EVENTS

### Policy:

#### Interstates/Freeways/Conventional (Other State Highways):

Temporary guide signing may be installed for special events meeting all the following criteria:

- The event is expected to attract a significant number of people unfamiliar with the area.
- Otherwise, necessary modifications to normal traffic flow patterns result in safety and traffic operational concerns that can be mitigated/minimized by temporary guide signing.
- Permanent guide signing does not otherwise identify the location of the event.
- Event organizers agree to coordinate with the appropriate CDOT Region Traffic Unit to pay for or otherwise reimburse CDOT for all costs associated with the design, manufacture, installation and removal of the temporary signing and other necessary traffic control devices (event organizers may be required to provide traffic control devices based on a CDOT approved traffic control plan and contract for fabrication, installation and maintenance of devices). In any case, CDOT will consult with affected law enforcement officials and take whatever actions are deemed necessary to ensure the public safety during the conduct of the event. Event organizers will be billed for the actual costs incurred in this effort.

### Background:

Requests for temporary directional signing for special events are quite common. Such special events include (but are not limited to) the PGA/International golf tournament, the United States Olympic Festival, World Cup Ski Championship races, Fourth of July Fireworks, and World Youth Day/Papal Visit activities. Event organizers often have a number of opportunities to provide attendees with travel directions via flyers, newspaper advertisements, ticket mailings, etc. and should be encouraged to do so. The principal purpose of Special Event signing is to direct attendees to parking areas, and special signing is typically installed only from the point where driver “confusion” might reasonably be expected to begin. Overall, the anticipated impacts of special event traffic on the public safety and mobility will determine what, if any, temporary directional signing is appropriate. Since both state and federal law prohibit most commercial advertisements on public rights of way, the purpose of special event guide signing is limited to directing traffic to and around the event site in a safe and efficient manner.

### Additional Criteria/Information:

There are typically two types of signage for a special event. The first type of signage is placed days or weeks prior to the event and provides notice to travelers of the forthcoming event. The second type of signage is placed the day of the event and provides directional information to/for the event. The second type of signage shall contain black legend on an orange background. Both types of signage shall follow the requirements of the most recent editions of CDOT’s Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction and the MUTCD. All sign aspects, such as, but not limited to: colors, wording, location, placement duration, etc., shall be agreed upon by the Regional Traffic Engineer. All signs shall be removed immediately after the last scheduled activities.

### Example Signs:



## **INTEGRATED ARTWORK INTO TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES**

### **Policy:**

Interstates/Freeways: Artwork in the right-of-way is prohibited.

(Other) State Highways: CDOT's policy regarding the use of integrating artwork is in accordance with the latest edition of CDOT's "Guidelines for Integrating Artwork into Transportation Facilities".

### **Background:**

Art and artistic design help to create useful and visually appealing urban spaces. At its best, art enriches Colorado's quality of life, providing a sense of place and adding interest and vitality to the landscape. At its worst, art is divorced from essential considerations of site and user needs, resulting in works which fail to serve the users and purposes intended. Whether it is viewed as the lubrication needed to boost public acceptance or the right thing to do in the public interest, integration of art forms and artwork is an important tool available to help create a successful roadway environment.

### **Additional Criteria/Information:**

Applications for incorporating artwork into transportation facilities shall be submitted to the Region Traffic Engineer of the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). The artwork must be sponsored by a local government, accompanied by a resolution from the local governing body and shall contain the following information:

1. Name of artwork sponsor and designer. Include information about individuals responsible for the tasks that must be undertaken to achieve the project's goals.
2. Scaled preliminary drawings, models and presentation materials of the proposed artwork sufficient to communicate the design intent.
3. Complete written description of the project requirements. Include the key issues of project, such as, what is to be designed and built; where will (might) it be built; it's relationship to the roadway and other highway elements; levels of design quality and amenity; role of the proposed artwork in the highway and/or community; schedule requirements or constraints; target date for completion; budget estimate and sources of funding; codes, regulations and required design reviews; and maintenance requirements and responsibilities.
4. Samples of materials, showing type, quality, textures, colors, etc.

Applications shall be submitted to the Region Traffic Engineer for initial review and comment. The Region Traffic Engineer may convene an aesthetic and design evaluation team to assist in his evaluation. This team will consist of the Preliminary Bridge Plans Engineer in CDOT's Office of Bridges and Structures, the State Signing Engineer in CDOT's Traffic & Safety Engineering Services and Division of Maintenance and others, as needed.

## **SIGN REQUESTS BY OUTSIDE ENTITIES**

### **Policy:**

All sign requests by outside entities must be in writing to the appropriate CDOT Region Traffic Engineer (or designee). CDOT shall investigate to see if the sign is warranted. If CDOT determines the sign is unwarranted, the outside entity shall be notified of the decision. If CDOT determines the sign is warranted, the sign permitting process illustrated in Figure 2 on page 48 shall be followed. Signs designated by outside entities shall be designed in accordance to CDOT Standards and Specifications and the sign's design layout shall be approved by the Region Traffic Engineer.

Payment shall be as follows:

1. The Region pays for fabricating and installing standard regulatory, warning, guide and school zone signs.
2. The entity reimburses the Region for fabricating and installing signs in the following categories: Other Traffic Generators, Political Boundary/Identification, Radio Information, Memorial Highways, Temporary Guide Signing for Special Events, and Local Government Services and Facilities.
3. The Region may require the entity to pay for fabricating and installing low priority signs.
4. The entity pays for relocating existing signs to make room for the entity's requested sign.

Maintenance shall be as follows:

5. Signs in the following categories shall be maintained by the entity: Other Traffic Generators, Temporary Guide Signing for Special Events, and Local Government Services and Facilities.
6. All signs that are purchased by an entity and have completed their useful service life (10 years max.) must be replaced at the requesting entity's expense.

### **Additional Criteria/Information:**

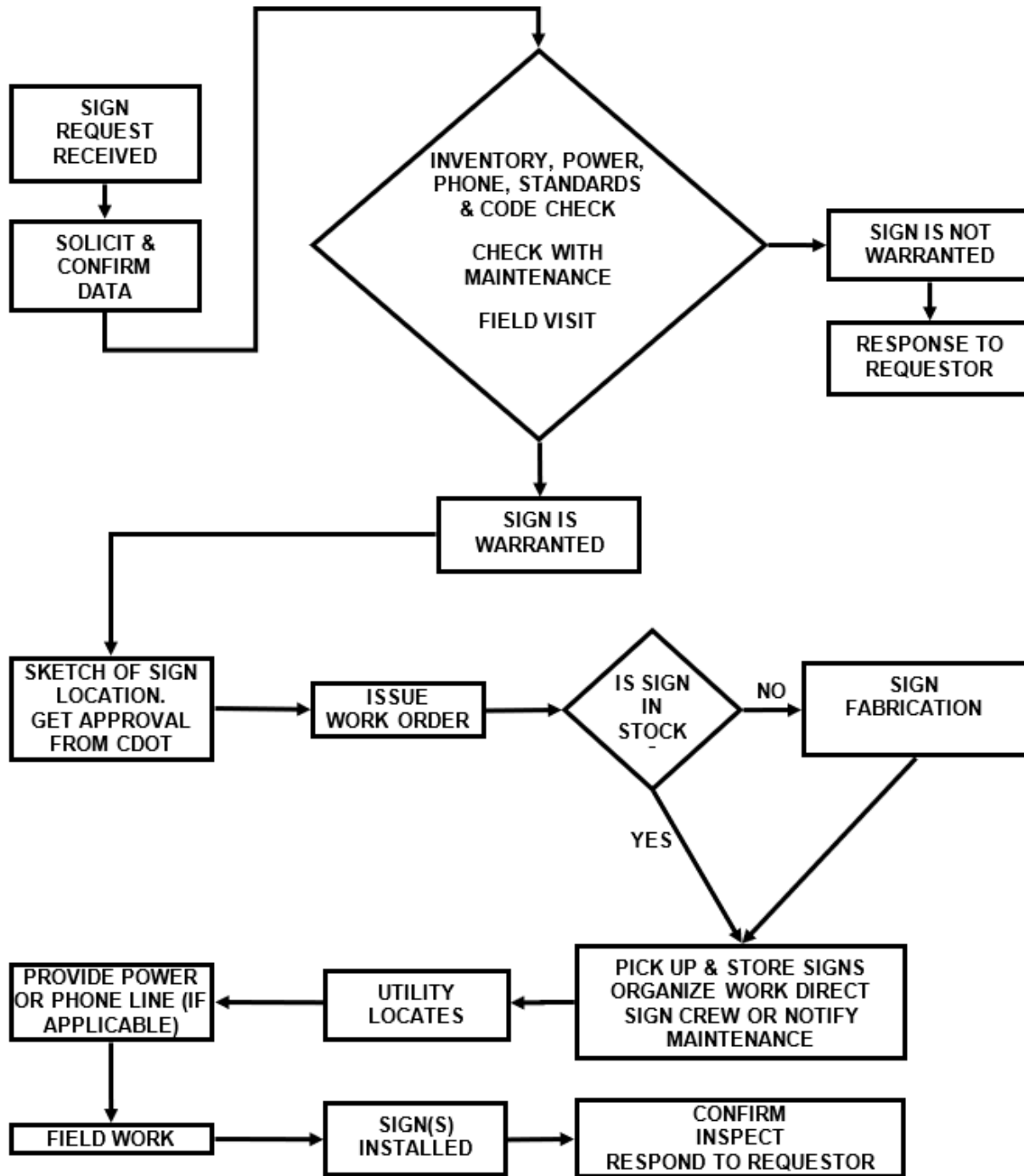
TODS and LOGO traffic generator signs shall be handled by Colorado Logos, Inc. See page 44 for more information on the TODS and LOGO programs.

More information on CDOT's permitting process can be found at:

<https://www.codot.gov/business/permits/utilitiesspecialuse/permit-process.html>.

## SIGN PERMITTING PROCESS

Figure 2



**Time Range:** 3 TO 9 WEEKS BASED ON SIGN SHOP WORKLOAD, AND LOCATES UP TO 5 MONTHS. IF POWER/PHONE DROPS ARE REQUIRED, ADD MORE TIME FOR WINTER SEASON

## VARIABLE MESSAGE SIGNS

### Policy:

#### Interstates/Freeways/Conventional (Other State Highways):

1. It is CDOT's policy to use VMSs to the optimum extent, in accordance with this policy statement, the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), and the document "CDOT Guidelines on Variable Message Signs (VMS)".
2. The Colorado Traffic Management Center (CTMC) shall have the authority to place messages on VMS signs that the CTMC can control, statewide, when the message content is requested from a verified and credible source, (i.e., CDOT, Colorado State Patrol). The CTMC will be responsible for removal of said message when applicable.

Information regarding a road being open or closed will be confirmed with CDOT forces, if CDOT forces are present at the site.

3. Individual CDOT Regions will have over-ride authority for message boards located in their Region.
4. The CTMC will notify the Regions of intended sign usage and message content when a message board is going to be used for a planned event (e.g., bike race, controlled burn).
5. The CTMC will notify concerned parties of sign changes via VMS "sign logs". A new sign log will be generated for each sign change.
6. Messages dealing with traveler safety and road conditions take precedence over information messages.
7. Federal and CDOT guidelines suggest VMS messages be limited to road/weather safety. Due to the nature of travel across Colorado, messages such as controlled burn, forest fire and fire ban information are considered appropriate messages. For more information, refer to "CDOT Guidelines on Variable Message Signs" at: <https://www.cotrip.org/its/policyguide.htm>.
8. Messages considered to be advertising in nature are not allowed and will not be placed on VMSs.
9. Traveler information messages relating to information sources such as COTrip.org and CDOT's travel information signs will be permitted when applicable.

### Background:

CDOT's policy regarding the use of Variable Message Signs (VMS) is in accordance with the latest edition of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

These guidelines are used by CDOT to ensure messages are used to inform and direct motorists of variable situations in a consistent and orderly manner.

### Additional Criteria/Information:

Variable (or Changeable) Message Signs are either fixed or portable electronic/electromechanical signs capable of being programmed to display a wide variety of messages. All variable message

signs used on CDOT right of way shall be controlled by CDOT or its contractors, or by local governments under an agreement with CDOT.

To help ensure the future value of the messages displayed on these signs, messages are restricted to those necessary to advise motorists of important road, weather, construction and traffic information. Based on agreement with local officials, sign messages related to forest fire prevention and hazards can be displayed when appropriate and no traffic related messages are warranted. Messages not related to the preceding or those that are redundant given existing signing or law are not allowed.

Region Traffic Engineers or designee must approve all planned Public Service Announcements (PSA) for VMS in their respective Regions, except for those regarding Amber Alert and Fire Danger.

## **SIGNING FOR THE UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE AND BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

The policies and criteria for signing United States Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management facilities and boundaries are contained within the current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between CDOT and these agencies. A copy of the current MOU is available at: <https://www.codot.gov/programs/environmental/documents/003MOU0610.pdf/view>.

## **SIGN POLICY VARIANCE COMMITTEE PROCESS**

In recognition that misunderstandings may occasionally occur during the administration of the policies contained in this booklet, the process described below has been established to allow an applicant for a sign to request a review of the administrative decision denying his/her request when the applicant believes the policies have been interpreted incorrectly by CDOT staff. It is not expected that the committee will establish new policy or allow a variance from existing policy adopted by the Transportation Commission but rather ensure consistent interpretation of adopted policy.

The Sign Policy Variance Committee (the Committee) shall consist of three members appointed by the Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). Customarily, no more than two of the members are employed by CDOT, however, committee make-up shall be at the discretion of the Executive Director.

Applicants may request the Committee review staff decisions by forwarding all relevant information to:

Sign Policy Variance Committee  
Colorado Department of Transportation  
c/o Traffic & Safety Engineering Services  
2829 W Howard Pl, 4th Floor  
Denver, Colorado 80204

It is important for the applicant to provide complete written information concerning the request for review as the Committee may or may not request a personal interview with the applicant prior to rendering a decision.

Upon receipt of a request for review, the Committee Chair shall ask the involved CDOT Region staff for their written analysis regarding the matter. In addition, the Committee may request a written analysis of the issues from non-committee members of Traffic & Safety Engineering Services and/or written analysis/information from any other affected person, agency or organization.

The Committee shall meet within 30 days of receipt of all relevant written information to review the issues and render a decision. In reaching a decision, the Committee shall consider all written information received, CDOT's Sign Policies as contained in this booklet, information contained in relevant sections of the federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and the Colorado Supplement thereto, and any other relevant CDOT standard, policy or practice.

The applicant shall be advised in writing of the Committee's decision, which shall be CDOT's final administrative decision regarding the matter.



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