

321.252 Department to adopt sign manual.

1. *a.* The department shall adopt a manual and specifications for a uniform system of traffic-control devices consistent with the provisions of [this chapter](#) for use upon highways within this state. Such uniform system shall correlate with and so far as possible conform to the system then current as approved by the American association of state highway and transportation officials.

b. The department shall include in its manual of traffic-control devices, specifications for a uniform system of highway signs for the purpose of guiding traffic to organized off-highway permanent camps, and camp areas, operated by recognized and established civic, religious, and nonprofit charitable organizations and to for-profit campgrounds and ski areas. The department shall purchase, install, and maintain the signs upon the prepayment of the costs by the organization or owner.

2. The department shall also establish criteria for guiding traffic on all fully controlled-access, divided, multilaned highways including interstate highways to each tourist attraction which is located within thirty miles of the highway and receives fifteen thousand or more visitors annually. Nothing in [this subsection](#) shall be construed to prohibit the department from erecting signs to guide traffic on these highways to tourist attractions which are located more than thirty miles from the highway or which receive fewer than fifteen thousand visitors annually.

3. *a.* The department shall establish, by rule, in cooperation with a tourist signing committee, the standards for tourist-oriented directional signs and shall annually review the list of attractions for which signing is in place. The rules shall conform to national standards for tourist-oriented directional signs adopted under 23 U.S.C. §131(q) and to the manual of uniform traffic-control devices.

(1) The tourist signing committee shall be made up of the directors or the directors' designees of the departments of agriculture and land stewardship, natural resources, and transportation, the director or the director's designee of the economic development authority, the chairperson or the chairperson's designee of the Iowa travel council, and a member of the outdoor advertising association of Iowa. The director or the director's designee of the economic development authority shall be the chairperson of the committee.

(2) The department of transportation shall be responsible for calling and setting the date of the meetings of the committee which meetings shall be based upon the amount of activity relating to signs. However, the committee shall meet at least once a month.

b. A tourist attraction is not subject to a minimum number of visitors annually to qualify for tourist-oriented directional signing.

4. The rules shall not be applicable to directional signs relating to historic sites on land owned or managed by state agencies, as provided in [section 321.253A](#). The rules shall include but are not limited to the following:

a. Criteria for eligibility for signing.

b. Criteria for limiting or excluding businesses, activities, services, and sites that maintain signs that do not conform to the requirements of [chapter 306B](#), [chapter 306C](#), [subchapter II](#), or other statutes or administrative rules regulating outdoor advertising.

c. Provisions for a fee schedule to cover the direct and indirect costs of sign manufacture, erection, and maintenance, and related administrative costs.

d. Provisions specifying maximum distances to eligible businesses, activities, services, and sites. Tourist-oriented directional signs may be placed on highways within the maximum travel distance that have the greatest traffic count per day, if sufficient space is available. If an adjacent landowner complains to the department about the placement of a tourist-oriented directional sign, the department shall attempt to reach an agreement with the landowner for relocating the sign. If possible, the sign shall be relocated from the place of objection. If the sign must be located on an objectionable place, it shall be located on the least objectionable place possible.

e. Provisions for trailblazing to facilities that are not on the crossroad. Appropriate trailblazing shall be installed over the most desirable routes on lesser traveled primary highways, secondary roads, and city streets leading to the tourist attraction.

- f.* Criteria for determining when to permit advance signing.
- g.* Provisions specifying conditions under which the time of operation of a business, activity, service, or site is shown.
- h.* Provisions for masking or removing signs during off seasons for businesses, activities, services, and sites operated on a seasonal basis. Faded signs shall be replaced and the commercial vendor charged for the cost of replacement based upon the fee schedule adopted.
- i.* Provisions specifying the maximum number of signs permitted per intersection.
- j.* Provisions for determining what businesses, activities, services, or sites are signed when there are more applicants than the maximum number of signs permitted.
- k.* Provisions for removing signs when businesses, activities, services, or sites cease to meet minimum requirements for participation and related costs.

5. Local authorities shall adhere to the specifications for signs as established by the department, and shall purchase, install, and maintain signs in their respective jurisdictions upon prepayment by the organization of the cost of such purchase, installation, and maintenance. The department shall include in its manual of traffic-control devices specifications for a uniform system of traffic-control devices in legally established school zones.

[C24, 27, §4627; C31, 35, §4627, 5079-d7; C39, §5019.01; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §321.252]

86 Acts, ch 1060, §1, 2; 90 Acts, ch 1183, §4; 2010 Acts, ch 1069, §93; 2011 Acts, ch 118, §85, 89; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §2112

Referred to in §321.342, 668.10

Subsection 3, paragraph a, subparagraph (1) amended