

CHAPTER 131
SIGNING ON PRIMARY HIGHWAYS
[Prior to 6/3/87, Transportation Department[820]—(06,K) Ch 3]

761—131.1(321) Destination signs at an intersection. This rule establishes the requirements and procedure for placing destination signs on a primary highway at the intersection of a secondary road.

131.1(1) Requirements.

a. A destination shown on a primary highway destination sign shall be one reached by following either the secondary road or the primary highway.

b. A secondary road destination shall not be located beyond the next primary highway.

c. The secondary road must be marked with sufficient route markers, arrows, and destination signs to guide a motorist through intersecting roads, winding roads and built-up areas.

d. To qualify for signing, a secondary road destination must be one of the following:

(1) Another primary highway.

(2) An incorporated community.

(3) An unincorporated village shown on the state transportation map.

(4) A publicly maintained park.

(5) A public-use or publicly owned airport.

(6) A historical site recognized and approved by the department of cultural affairs.

e. The department shall determine which primary highway destinations qualify for signing.

131.1(2) Procedure.

a. To request placement of destination signs at the intersection of a primary highway and a secondary road, the county engineer shall obtain Form 740023, "Proposed Directional Signing," from the appropriate district office, complete it and submit it to the appropriate district office. The county engineer may request signs for destinations on the secondary road that meet the criteria in paragraph 131.1(1) "d" and destinations on the primary highway.

b. If destination signs are already in place at the intersection, any person may request listing additional destinations by submitting a written request to the traffic and safety bureau.

c. The traffic and safety bureau shall determine if a request is to be approved or denied and notify the requester of its action on the request.

d. The department shall install and maintain the primary highway destination signs. The department shall also furnish primary route markers and auxiliary signs for installation on the secondary road and install secondary road route markers and auxiliary signs furnished by the county on the primary highway.

[ARC 1986C, IAB 5/13/15, effective 6/17/15; ARC 5426C, IAB 2/10/21, effective 3/17/21]

761—131.2(321) Erection of signs for numbered business routes. This rule establishes signing requirements, responsibilities and procedures for the erection of signs for numbered business routes.

131.2(1) Definition. A business route is a route principally within the corporate city limits which provides the public a marked route through the business area of the city as an alternate to the regular route which bypasses the city or its congested area.

131.2(2) Requirements.

a. The business route must connect with the regular route outside the congested area or the corporate limits, but within a reasonable distance of those limits.

b. The route must be designated over paved streets and highways which are available to all types of vehicles.

131.2(3) Responsibilities.

a. All business route identification signs, including the "Business" route sign, U.S. or state numbered route marker and directional arrow, will be furnished by the city.

b. The city and county shall erect all signs required on streets and highways within their respective jurisdictions.

c. The department of transportation shall erect all signs required within the right-of-way of primary highways and primary highway extensions.

d. The municipality shall maintain all signs at proper position and elevation, and in a clean and legible state.

131.2(4) Procedures.

a. A request for the designation of a business route shall be submitted by a city to the appropriate district office.

b. The traffic and safety bureau shall determine if the request is to be approved or denied.

c. The traffic and safety bureau shall designate the signing requirements for establishment of the business route.

131.2(5) Service level to be maintained. If either the signs or the streets and highways are not maintained at acceptable levels for traffic service, the department of transportation may require removal of the signs designating a business route.

[ARC 5426C, IAB 2/10/21, effective 3/17/21]

761—131.3(321) Erection of signs for schools. This rule establishes requirements and procedures for the erection of signs for schools.

131.3(1) Requirements.

a. Signs may be erected for a junior college, college, university or an area community college.

(1) The school shall provide an accredited program of academic study or an approved program of technical or vocational training under the supervision of the state department of education or the state board of regents.

(2) The school shall have a minimum enrollment of 500 full-time students at that school site.

b. Signs may be erected for a public or private elementary, middle, junior high or senior high school.

(1) The school shall provide an accredited program of academic study under the supervision of the state board of education.

(2) Signs shall not be installed on the federal system of interstate highways or at freeway interchanges.

c. The school is not immediately adjacent to a primary highway or a primary highway extension.

d. The school is located on and directly served by the street or highway considered for signing.

131.3(2) Procedures.

a. A request for school signing shall be submitted to the appropriate district office.

b. The traffic and safety bureau shall determine if the request is to be approved or denied.

c. Signs shall be furnished, erected and maintained by the department of transportation upon determination that the requirements of subrule 131.3(1) have been satisfied.

[ARC 5426C, IAB 2/10/21, effective 3/17/21]

761—131.4(321) Erection of camping service signs on interstate highways. This rule establishes requirements and procedures for the erection of camping service signs.

131.4(1) Definition. “All-weather roads” are roads with sufficient surfacing so as to be passable regardless of weather conditions.

131.4(2) Requirements.

a. The distance of the camp facility from the nearest off-ramp intersection with the intersected highway or street should not exceed five miles via an all-weather road or street.

b. Campsites should have a minimum of 20 spaces available for camping and parking.

c. The camping area and all facilities shall be available to the public 24 hours a day on a year-round basis. If a camping facility meets the “24 hours a day” condition but is operated on a seasonal basis, camping service signs shall be provided with the condition that the sign be masked (at no cost to the owner) during that part of the year when the facility is not open to the public.

131.4(3) Procedures.

a. A request for camping service signs should be made to the appropriate district office.

b. The appropriate district office shall forward Form 810013, “Application for Camping Service Sign, Interstate,” to the requesting camp owner.

c. The camp owner shall complete Form 810013, sign it, and return it to the appropriate district office.

d. The appropriate district office shall review Form 810013 and verify by inspection that the requirements established in subrule 131.4(2) have been met.

e. When the appropriate district office has verified through inspection that the requirements are satisfied, the district traffic technician shall complete and sign Form 810013, signifying approval of the application. A copy of the approved application shall be promptly forwarded to the applicant.

f. Upon approval of Form 810013, the department of transportation shall erect and maintain, at no cost to the camp owner, camping service signs on the interstate highway. (The department of transportation shall also bear the cost of masking camping service signs during the periods that seasonal campsites are closed to the public.)

131.4(4) Conditions.

a. The campground must meet applicable state and local standards for health and sanitation. Camping service signs may be removed if the department is notified by the responsible state or local agency that the campground is in violation of these standards.

b. Camping service signs may be removed if the campground is found to be in violation of any other requirement of this rule.

c. Signing shall not be reinstalled without proper notification that the violation has been corrected. [ARC 1986C, IAB 5/13/15, effective 6/17/15; ARC 5426C, IAB 2/10/21, effective 3/17/21]

761—131.5(321) Erection of signs for sanitary landfills. This rule establishes requirements and procedures for the erection of signs for sanitary landfills.

131.5(1) Requirements.

a. The access from the primary highway must be a direct connection to the sanitary landfill;

b. If the access to the sanitary landfill is connected to a secondary road, the county must make a request on Form 740023, "Proposed Directional Signing," to the appropriate district office; and

c. The sanitary landfill site must be operated under a permit issued by the Iowa department of natural resources.

131.5(2) Procedure.

a. A request for sanitary landfill signing shall be submitted to the appropriate district office.

b. The county shall be promptly informed of the final disposition of the request.

c. If the request is approved, the department of transportation shall secure, erect and maintain the sanitary landfill sign on the primary highway.

[ARC 5426C, IAB 2/10/21, effective 3/17/21]

761—131.6(321) Erection of signs for special events. This rule establishes requirements, procedures and responsibilities for the erection of signs for special events.

131.6(1) Requirements.

a. Expected attendance of over 10,000 people per day.

b. Gathering to involve attendance of people on a statewide basis or nationwide basis.

131.6(2) Procedures.

a. A request for special event signing shall be submitted to the appropriate district office.

b. The traffic and safety bureau shall determine if the request is to be approved or denied.

c. The traffic and safety bureau shall designate the signing requirements and locations for the signs.

131.6(3) Responsibilities.

a. The required signs shall be furnished by the sponsoring organization.

b. The signs shall be placed and removed by the sponsoring organization.

c. The sponsoring organization shall provide for personnel to direct traffic during the duration of the event.

131.6(4) Duration of placement. The signs are to be in place only on the day or days of the special event.

[ARC 1986C, IAB 5/13/15, effective 6/17/15; ARC 5426C, IAB 2/10/21, effective 3/17/21]

761—131.7(321) Erection of signs for organized off-highway camps. This rule establishes requirements, procedures and responsibilities for the erection of signs for organized off-highway camps.

131.7(1) Requirements. The camps shall be permanent and operated by recognized and established civic, religious, and nonprofit charitable organizations.

131.7(2) Procedures.

a. A request for signing shall be submitted to the appropriate district office.

b. The traffic and safety bureau shall determine if the request is to be approved or denied.

131.7(3) Financial responsibility. The department of transportation shall purchase, install and maintain the signs upon the prepayment by the organization of the cost of purchase, installation and maintenance.

[ARC 5426C, IAB 2/10/21, effective 3/17/21]

761—131.8(321) Erection of signs for county conservation parks. This rule establishes requirements, procedures and responsibilities for the erection of signs for county conservation parks.

131.8(1) Requirements. The park shall have as its primary purposes outdoor recreation and nature appreciation.

131.8(2) Procedures.

a. A request for county conservation park signing shall be submitted on Form 740023, "Proposed Directional Signing," to the appropriate district office.

b. The traffic and safety bureau shall review and make the final determination on the request and promptly inform the county of the determination.

131.8(3) Responsibilities.

a. If the request is approved, the traffic and safety bureau shall design the signs and furnish the applicant a scaled drawing of the required signs.

b. The applicant shall furnish to the department of transportation the required signs at a location specified by the department.

c. The department of transportation will erect the signs and provide normal maintenance.

d. If the sign(s) must be replaced for any reason, the applicant shall furnish new sign(s) to the department of transportation.

[ARC 5426C, IAB 2/10/21, effective 3/17/21]

761—131.9(321) Erection of no parking signs. This rule establishes procedures and conditions for the erection of no parking signs on rural primary highways.

131.9(1) Procedures. Requests for the erection of no parking signs on rural primary highways shall be made by the Iowa state patrol or sheriff to the appropriate district office.

131.9(2) Conditions. The signs will be furnished, erected and maintained by the department of transportation; however, they shall be removed if the department determines the parking prohibition is not enforced.

[ARC 5426C, IAB 2/10/21, effective 3/17/21]

761—131.10(321) Signing for named routes and memorial bridges. This rule establishes the requirements and procedures for placing special signs along the primary highway for the purpose of designating a primary highway as a memorial highway, a historic trail, or a scenic trail or a bridge on the primary highway as a memorial bridge.

131.10(1) Definitions.

"*Historic trail*" means a route located on or near the approximate alignment of a trail on which a person or group traveled while making a journey of regional or national historic significance.

"*Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)*" means the Federal Highway Administration standards on traffic control devices, as adopted in rule 761—130.1(321).

"*Memorial bridge*" means a bridge on the primary highway that has been given a name to commemorate a person, group, place or event of regional or national significance.

"*Memorial highway*" means a primary highway that has been given a name to commemorate a person, group, place or event of regional or national significance.

“*Named route*” means a memorial highway, a historic trail or a scenic trail.

“*Primary highway*,” for the purpose of this rule, does not include an interstate highway.

“*Scenic trail*” means a route, loop or circuit with special scenic or recreational appeal.

131.10(2) General requirements.

a. Interstate highways have been designated as the “Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways” and are not eligible for naming under these rules. However, bridges on interstate highways may be named.

b. The named route shall be continuous with no breaks at the boundaries of political subdivisions. Each city and county through which a named route passes must provide the department a resolution in support of the route designation. This includes portions of the route off the primary highway system. The memorial bridge shall be located on the primary highway, and the city and county in which the bridge is located must provide a resolution to the department in support of the bridge designation.

c. A memorial highway should normally encompass the entire length of a primary highway within the state. However, it is permissible to name a section of a primary highway if the section is unique or independent by virtue of its design characteristics, such as a freeway, or its geographic location, such as a segment between two junctions. No more than one name shall be used for a bridge or for the same section of a route.

d. Signs designating a named route or memorial bridge shall be furnished and paid for by the applicant including any replacements needed due to sign deterioration or damage. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in removal of all signs for the named route or memorial bridge along the primary highway. The applicant is responsible for providing the department with the applicant’s current contact information. If the department is unable to make contact with the applicant when replacement signs are needed, it may be necessary to remove all signs for the named route or memorial bridge along the primary highway.

e. The applicant shall be responsible for the costs to install the signs, including the posts and hardware.

f. A named route or memorial bridge shall not be given a name which could be considered discriminatory, biased or inappropriate.

131.10(3) Memorial highway or bridge signing. Signing for memorial highways or bridges shall comply with the MUTCD as modified by the following:

a. Memorial highway or bridge signing off the primary highway right-of-way:

(1) Preferably, signing for a memorial highway or bridge should neither appear on or along the primary highway nor be placed on bridges or other highway components. Signing is best accomplished by placing memorial plaques in rest areas, scenic overlooks or other appropriate locations off the right-of-way where parking is provided. These plaques shall be located in a manner that will not distract motor vehicle operators.

(2) Departmental approval is not needed for memorial highway or bridge signing placed off the right-of-way at locations not subject to control under Iowa Code chapter 306B or chapter 306C, division II.

b. Memorial highway or bridge signing within the primary highway right-of-way:

(1) If placement of memorial plaques off the right-of-way is not acceptable, the department may approve the installation of memorial highway or bridge signs within the right-of-way provided they are independent of other guide and directional signing and they do not adversely compromise the safety or efficiency of traffic flow.

(2) As determined by the department, a memorial highway or bridge sign within the right-of-way shall be sized based on the size of lettering required for the traffic speed and type of highway being named. The color will be white lettering on brown background, and the design must be approved by the department. If the applicant prefers the sign include a design symbolic of the group or event, instead of the name, then the sign is limited in size to no larger than 24 inches in width and 30 inches in height. The color and design must be approved by the department.

(3) The number of memorial highway signs within the right-of-way shall be limited to one sign at each end of the memorial highway and one sign when entering the corporate limits of each city through

which the memorial highway passes. The number of memorial bridge signs will be limited to one sign for each direction of traffic.

131.10(4) *Historic trail and scenic trail signing.* The department may approve the installation of historic trail and scenic trail signing within the primary highway right-of-way. Signing for historic trails and scenic trails shall comply with the MUTCD and the following:

a. A sign designating a historic trail or scenic trail shall be no larger than 24 inches in width and 30 inches in height. The colors used shall be limited to white, black, brown, blue or green. The color and design must be approved by the department.

b. Signs designating a historic trail or scenic trail may be placed at each end of the trail, when entering the corporate limits of cities through which the trail passes, and at points where the trail direction changes.

c. Additional trail signs may be placed between cities along the trail. These signs when facing the same direction of travel shall be spaced at least five miles apart. An exception may be made when the trail direction changes.

d. A sign designating a historic trail or scenic trail shall be placed alone on a post.

131.10(5) *Procedures.*

a. To request placement of signs designating a primary highway or bridge as a named route or memorial bridge, the applicant shall submit a formal written request to the appropriate district office.

b. The request shall contain the following:

(1) A detailed description of the proposed named route or memorial bridge, including those portions of the route off the primary highway system.

(2) If the request is for a memorial highway or bridge, documentation supporting the significance of the person, group, place or event for which the memorial highway or bridge is named. Any person being honored must have provided extraordinary public service or some exemplary contribution to the public good or outstanding service to the nation, this state or the person's community and have a connection to the community where the highway or bridge is located. The person being honored must be deceased for one year.

(3) If the request is for a historic trail, documentation supporting the historical significance of the trail.

(4) If the request is for a scenic trail, information outlining the features or facilities that are of special scenic or recreational appeal.

(5) A sketch of the sign proposed for designating the named route.

(6) Proposed locations for placement of the signs, including those locations off the primary highway system.

(7) A signed resolution from each city and county through which the named route passes or where the bridge is located, indicating support of the route designation.

c. The department shall evaluate the request against the requirements of this rule and notify the requester of approval or denial of the request. Notification of denial shall include the reasons for denial.

d. The department shall install approved signs provided by the applicant (see paragraph 131.10(2)“*d*”) and provide routine maintenance when the signs are to be located within the primary highway right-of-way. The applicant shall be responsible for the installation costs for each of the signs.

e. The department is not responsible for the installation or maintenance of signs placed off the right-of-way or placed on the city or county highways.

[ARC 1986C, IAB 5/13/15, effective 6/17/15]

761—131.11(314) *Signing for Iowa medal of honor highway.* This rule establishes the procedures and requirements for private entities to purchase and pay for the installation of signs designating the Iowa medal of honor highway.

131.11(1) *Definition.* “*Iowa medal of honor highway*” means the segment of the highway known as United States Highway 20, as designated as of June 17, 2020, which crosses this state from Sioux City to Dubuque.

131.11(2) *Requirements.*

a. The number of signs within the highway right-of-way shall be limited to one sign at each end of the Iowa medal of honor highway for traffic entering the state and one sign at each entry point of the corporate limits of each city through which the Iowa medal of honor highway passes.

b. Each sign shall match the design approved and provided by the department, and the sign materials shall comply with departmental standard specifications as they exist at the time of fabrication. The departmental standard specifications can be found through the department's electronic reference library available on the department's website at www.iowadot.gov.

c. Once signs are installed at one of the approved locations, no additional requests will be accepted for that location. When signs have been installed at all locations identified in paragraph 131.11(2) "a," no further requests will be accepted.

d. The applicant may purchase a sign from the department's sign shop or any other private sign shop. If an applicant chooses to obtain a sign from a private sign shop, the department will furnish the sign design and approve the construction prior to purchase. The department will also inspect the sign as stated in subrule 131.11(5).

e. Signs designating the Iowa medal of honor highway shall be furnished and paid for by the applicants, including any replacements needed due to sign deterioration or damage. The applicant is responsible for providing the traffic and safety bureau with the applicant's current contact information so the applicant can be contacted when a replacement sign is needed. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in removal of all signs the applicant purchased. This would allow a new private entity to sponsor the signing.

f. The applicant shall be responsible for the cost to install the sign, including the posts and hardware. Payment to the department must be received prior to the installation of the sign.

g. The department shall install the sign.

131.11(3) Procedures.

a. A written request to purchase or install a sign shall be submitted to the traffic and safety bureau.

b. The request shall contain the following:

- (1) The applicant's name and contact information.
- (2) A description of the location where the sign is to be installed.
- (3) If the sign will be purchased from the department or a private sign shop.

131.11(4) Approval. If the request complies with this rule, the traffic and safety bureau shall respond to the applicant with approval of the proposed location or modified location and an estimate of the costs for the sign and installation. Following inspection of the sign in compliance with subrule 131.11(5) and receipt of payment, the department shall install the sign.

131.11(5) Inspection. If a sign is not purchased from the department sign shop, the applicant shall deliver the sign to the department sign shop for inspection. Upon receipt of the sign, the department shall inspect the sign for compliance with the approved sign design and departmental specifications and notify the applicant.

[ARC 5426C, IAB 2/10/21, effective 3/17/21]

761—131.12 to 131.14 Reserved.

761—131.15(321) Information and address. Information regarding the signing addressed in this chapter is available from: Traffic and Safety Bureau, Iowa Department of Transportation, 800 Lincoln Way, Ames, Iowa 50010. Submissions to the traffic and safety bureau shall also be sent or delivered to this address.

[ARC 5426C, IAB 2/10/21, effective 3/17/21]

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 314.31, 321.252 and 321.253.

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