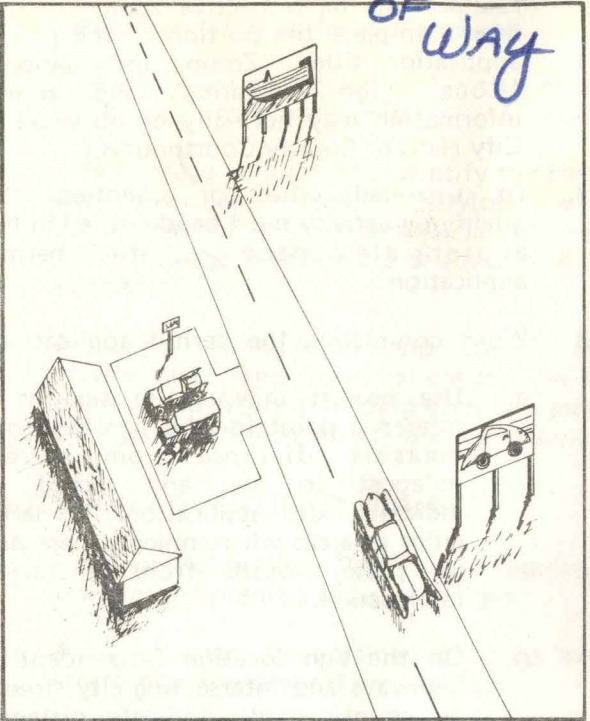


RIGHT OF WAY 335



Guide To Iowa Outdoor Advertising Sign Regulations Along Primary Highways



INTRODUCTION

The Iowa laws regulating outdoor advertising signs are rather complex, and thus, the Department has prepared this "Guide" to answer some of the most frequently asked questions pertaining to the erection of new advertising signs.

The material in this "Guide" is just that, a guide! It is the sign owner's responsibility to be sure that his proposed sign is erected in conformance with Iowa Law.

Please note this "Guide" discusses only those sign controls applicable to primary highways. The sign controls for interstate and freeway primary highways are more restrictive and must be discussed on a case-by-case basis. The sign controls in this "Guide" do not apply to city streets and county roads which are located away from the primary highway system.

In cities, signs are subject to control if they are visible from the highway and located within 660 feet of the highway right of way. In rural areas, any sign visible from the highway is subject to control, regardless of the distance it is located from the highway right of way.

GENERAL PROHIBITIONS

1. No sign may encroach upon or overhang the highway right of way.
2. No sign may be lighted in a manner which impairs the vision of the driver of any motor vehicle.
3. No sign may obstruct the view of any highway or railroad so as to render dangerous the use of the highway.
4. No sign may imitate or resemble an official traffic control sign, signal or device.
5. No sign may obscure or physically interfere with an official traffic control sign, signal or device.

COMMON TYPES OF SIGNS

1. On Premise Signs

- a. Signs advertising the principal products sold or the activity conducted on the property at the sign site.
- b. Signs concerning the sale or lease of the property upon which the sign is located. ("For Sale" or "For Lease" signs displaying the legend "Sold" or "Leased" are not legal on premise signs.)

2. Off Premise Signs

Signs displaying messages of general advertising about products or services available at locations other than at the sign site.

3. Municipal Recognition Signs

Signs displaying a message of "Welcome" or a similar community spirited message which are placed along the highway approaching Iowa's cities.

4. Church or Service Club Signs

Small signs displaying a message relating to the facility location, services, or meetings.

ON PREMISE SIGN CONTROLS

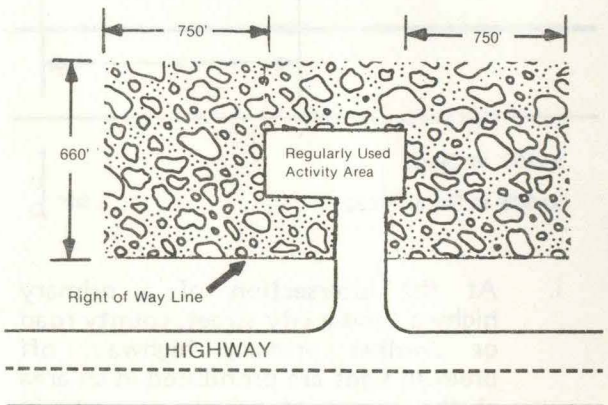
1. In addition to the GENERAL PROHIBITIONS, on premise signs must conform to the following criteria:
 - a. The signs must be located on the same property as the advertised activity and within the limits of the regularly used buildings, structures, parking areas, storage and processing areas which are essential and customary to the conduct of business.
 - b. Such regularly used areas do not include narrow strips or other land configurations that cannot be put to any reasonable use directly related to the advertised activity except for signing.

- c. An on premise sign's message is limited to advertising only those products sold or activities conducted at the sign site.
2. Signs which conform to the above criteria do not require state permits or approval. However, local city or county permits or approval may be required.
3. Signs which do not conform to the above criteria are not considered on premise signs and state permits are required.

OFF PREMISE SIGN CONTROLS

1. Any off premise sign must conform to the permit, zoning, size, lighting and spacing criteria of state law as follows:
 - a. A permit must be obtained from the Department prior to the erection of a sign.
 - b. In cities and counties where local zoning has been established, new signs may be erected only in areas which are zoned commercial or industrial.
 - c. In unzoned cities and counties, new signs may be erected only in areas classified as "unzoned commercial or industrial". These are areas occupied by one or more commercial or industrial activities (e.g. service station, grain elevator, department store, manufacturing plant, etc.) and the area surrounding them on the same side of the highway within the limits as detailed below.

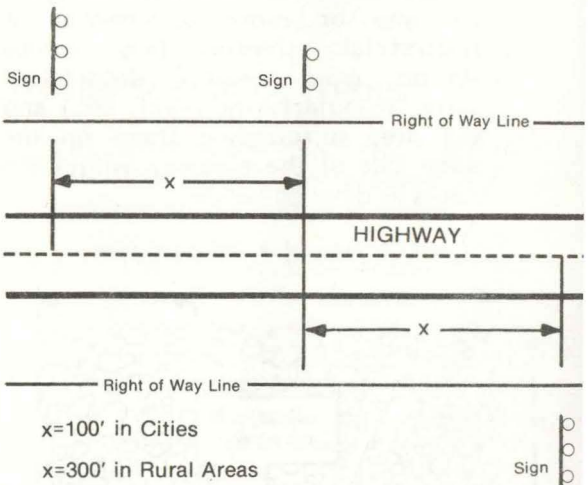
Unzoned Commercial or Industrial Area



- d. The display area of a single face sign is limited to a maximum of 1200 square feet.
- e. A maximum of two faces may be oriented in the same direction. The two faces must be on a common structure. The maximum combined display area of the two faces is 750 square feet.
- f. In general, flashing, intermittent or moving lights are prohibited.
- g. In cities, a new sign must be a minimum of 100 feet from any other off premise sign facing in the same direction. (Refer to the illustration below.)
- h. In rural areas, a new sign must be a minimum of 300 feet from any other off premise sign facing in the same direction. (Refer to the illustration below.)

Sign Spacing

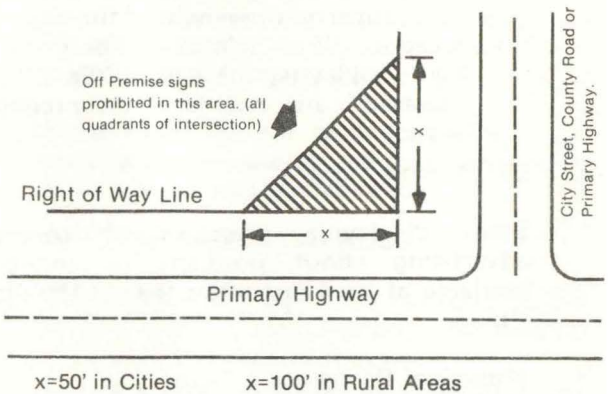
All measurements are along the center line of the highway between signs facing the same direction.



- i. At the intersection of a primary highway and a city street, county road or another primary highway, off premise signs are prohibited in an area at the corner of private property in

order to maintain adequate sight distance for motorist safety. (Refer to the illustration below.)

Sight Distance at Intersections



CHURCH AND SERVICE CLUB SIGN CONTROLS

1. The Department's approval of the sign message and proposed location is required prior to the sign's erection. A special application form must be filed with the Department, but no fees are required.
2. Individual signs are limited to a maximum of 8 square feet of display area. The message content is restricted to the name of the church or club, its location, hours of services or meetings, and an appropriate emblem. (Any message in the nature of advertising is prohibited.)
3. Individual 8 square foot signs for an unlimited number of church or service clubs may be allowed on a single background panel, each requiring an application.
4. Municipal Recognition and church or service club signs may be erected on a common structure providing each category of signing conforms to established criteria.

MUNICIPAL RECOGNITION SIGN CONTROLS

1. The Department's approval of the sign message and proposed location is required

prior to the sign's erection. A special application form must be filed with the Department, but no fees are required.

2. The sign must be located within two miles of the city's corporate limits.
3. The message content may identify the city, its boundaries, public services, and attractions of a non-commercial nature. (Any message in the nature of advertising is prohibited.)
4. Municipal Recognition and church or service club signs may be erected on a common structure providing each category of signing conforms to established criteria.

OUTDOOR ADVERTISING PERMITS

1. Outdoor Advertising Permits are required only for off premise advertising signs.
2. A permit must be obtained prior to the erection of any new off premise sign.
3. A permit is required for each face of an off premise sign. Thus, a permit application must be filed for each face.
4. Permit fees are set by statute at \$25.00 per permit at time of application (initial fee) with a \$5.00 per permit fee (annual renewal fee) due on or before June 30 each year. Permit holders will receive a computerized billing approximately June 1 each year for the renewal fee.
5. The following must accompany each permit application submitted.
 - a. A check for the fee or fees due, made payable to the IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.
 - b. A copy of the sign owner's site lease with the landowner (In the case of a verbal lease, a statement of the terms of the lease signed by the sign owner will be accepted.)
 - c. A photograph, sketch or plan of the sign.

6. In cities or counties where zoning has been established, the respective zoning official must complete the portion of the permit application titled "Zoning Information" (Local sign regulations and zoning information may normally be obtained at City Halls or County Courthouses.)
7. In unzoned cities or counties, the qualifying activity must be identified in the appropriate space on the permit application.
8. When completing the permit application:
 - a. Use nearest milepost to sign as a reference point for the sign location, measure distance from nearest milepost to sign and record as indicated on application. In large cities or areas where mileposts are not in place, locate from a major intersection.
 - b. On the sign location map, identify highways and intersecting city streets or county roads. Indicate distance from sign to pavement, measure from back of curb or the near edge of pavement, not from road shoulder. (Referencing sign site to identifiable landmarks will aid in expediting permit processing.)

WHERE TO OBTAIN APPLICATION FORMS AND INFORMATION

Write To: Office of Right of Way
Highway Division
Iowa Department of Transportation
Ames, IA 50010

OR

Telephone: 515-296-1449

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