

PLACEMENT OF POLITICAL SIGNS

Signage bearing political messages **may not** be placed within **250 feet of the polling place** in public ways; also applies to the Absentee Voting location (**Town Office**).

The Department of Transportation has provided the following information concerning statutory and regulatory requirements applicable to placement of political posters and signs.

It is suggested that this information be passed on to all campaign workers & supporters.

The provision of Title 23, M.R.S.A., Sub Section 1913-A and Department Regulation, provide for political posters and signs as follows:

- May be erected within the right-of-way limits of public ways **no sooner than six (6) weeks prior** to the primary or general election and **must be removed no later than one week following the date of the election**, primary or referendum.
- Posting is **limited to 6 weeks during any one calendar year.** — JAN - JULY
AUG - DEC
- Sign must contain: owners **name, contact info**, and the **chosen 6-wk period dates**.
- Signage; similar/same message: may be placed **no closer than 30'** of one another.

- May be erected on **private** property **outside the right-of-way limits of public ways** (this includes ditches) at any time prior to the primary or general election, limited in size to a maximum of 50 square feet.

- **Shall not be erected or maintained on any traffic control signs/posts or devices, public utility poles or fixtures, upon any trees or painted or drawn upon rocks or their natural feature.** They must be affixed to their own stake or post, may be attached to a building or dwelling (with permission), or displayed on vehicles.

- May be displayed to view to all public ways except for the Interstate Highway System; Signs **may not** be placed within the limits of any controlled access highway nor erected **within 660 ft.** of the nearest edge of the Interstate Highway System in such a manner **that the message may be read from the Interstate Highway.**

- Traffic safety should be of the utmost consideration in placement of political signs. Candidates and campaign workers should take great care **not to place signs or posters where same could create a traffic hazard.**

- The **unauthorized** removal or destruction of political signs is a civil violation under Maine law (Title 23 MRSA, Section 1917-A), and may carry a fine of up to \$250. Specifically, the law states that "a person who takes, defaces or disturbs a **lawfully** placed sign bearing political messages relating to a general election, primary election or referendum commits a civil violation for which a forfeiture of up to \$250 may be adjudged.



STATE OF MAINE
 DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 16 STATE HOUSE STATION
 AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0016

Janet T. Mills
 GOVERNOR

Bruce A. Van Note
 COMMISSIONER

To Whom it May Concern:

As we approach another campaign season the Maine Department of Transportation would like to take this opportunity to offer some information regarding the placement of temporary signs in the right-of-way on state and state aid highways.

Changes were made to the temporary sign laws during the 129th Legislature. The law allows temporary signs, which include campaign signs, to be placed in the right-of-way for up to 6 weeks from January 1st to June 30th and another 6 weeks between July 1st and December 31st. The law further states that individual signs bearing substantially the same message must be placed at least 30 feet from one another and requires that each sign be labeled with the owner’s name, address and the date on which the sign was erected. This will help MaineDOT discern whether a sign is in compliance and also allows the Department to contact an entity if a sign needs to be removed for any reason.

There are areas within the state’s roadway system that are off limits to temporary signs. These areas include the Maine Interstate System, the Maine Turnpike Authority system, Route 1 between Bath and Brunswick and all connecting interchanges and ramps. Along with the interstate system, some sections of state highways have been designated as “control of access” (C.O.A) roadways where ingress and egress to and from the highway is prohibited/limited. **No temporary signs of any kind can be placed along these control of access areas.** These areas have been officially designated with signage indicating the beginning and ending of a C.O.A. A sample of these signs has been provided below for your reference:



Note: The interstate, including the Maine Turnpike and all their ramps and the portion of Route 1 between Bath and Brunswick do not have C.O.A. signage. The signage denoted to the right has been erected on those other roadways that have C.O.A.

Temporary signs are also prohibited on traffic control devices (stop signs, yield signs, warning signs, guide signs, regulatory signs, etc.), all utility poles and trees,

on islands within a rotary/roundabout, and in medians/islands in the center of the road that are less than 6 feet wide.

Here are some questions that campaign personnel may ask regarding the placement of political signs:

How do I recognize a “control of access” area?

- *Aside from the Interstate System, MaineDOT officials have marked C.O.A areas across the state. These areas will have signs indicating the beginning and ending of a C.O.A.*

What will happen to my sign if it has been placed within a C.O.A. section?

- *MaineDOT personnel have been advised to remove temporary signs from within the C.O.A. areas. Maintenance crews have also been instructed to safely store the signs until the owner of the sign can be contacted or 60 days, whichever comes first.*

Does MaineDOT enforce these sign placement restrictions statewide?

- *MaineDOT is committed to providing the equitable enforcement of these sign restrictions upon notification of a violation.*
- *Per a recent statute change, Temporary Signs within Urban compact areas may be enforced by the municipality they are within.*

What do I need to know about placing my sign along the roadway?

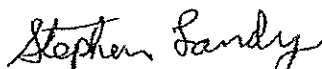
- *The first thing to consider in placement is the safety of the traveling public. Please do not install your signs where they will limit the sight line of anyone trying to pull out of a side road or driveway. Signs that block a driver's sight line will be removed and held at the closest MaineDOT maintenance lot to be picked up by the owner.*

In summary, when placing political signs, the important areas to avoid are the interstate system with the connecting interchanges, including the MTA system, and control of access areas across the state. Also, individual signs bearing the same message can be no closer than 30 feet from one another and must contain appropriate contact information and the date in which the sign was placed in the ROW. Candidates/referendums/special interest signage may want to work with sign making companies to have the contact information printed on their signs. MaineDOT will continue to provide the necessary information to help Maine's candidates.

For more information regarding the appropriate placement of political signs, please contact the Department's Legislative Liaison, Meghan Russo at Meghan.russo@maine.gov.

MaineDOT appreciates your cooperation in this effort.

Sincerely,



Stephen Landry, P.E.
State Traffic Engineer
MaineDOT