

TxDOT Guidelines for Acknowledgment Signing

Section 1. General Description

Acknowledgment signs are a way of recognizing an individual, company, business, volunteer group or other jurisdictions that provide a highway-related service. Acknowledgment signs include sponsorship signs for Adopt-A-Highway litter removal programs, maintenance of a parkway or interchange, and other highway maintenance or beautification sponsorship programs.

Use of highway right-of-way for advertising purposes is not allowed. This policy position is consistent with the principles and intent of several laws including 23 U.S.C. §1.23(b), 23 U.S.C. §109(d), and 23 U.S.C. §131. The Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices Section 1A.01 states that "Traffic control devices or their supports shall not bear any advertising message or any other message that is not related to traffic control." However, there is a distinction between signing intended as advertising and signing intended as an acknowledgment for services provided.

Current TxDOT programs utilizing Acknowledgment signs include Adopt-A-Highway, Adopt-An-Airport, and Landscape Partnership (See Figure 1). Additional programs developed are to comply with these guidelines.

Section 2. Definitions

- A. Acknowledgment logo – A separate sign panel of specified dimensions attached to an Acknowledgment Sign and containing the commercial establishment name, symbol, brand, trademark, or combination. If a logo is to be used for the acknowledgement sign, the maximum size of the logo panel shall be 36 inches long by 18 inches high. The logo panel must be provided by the participant.
- B. Acknowledgment Sign - A sign that recognizes a participant providing a highway related service. An Acknowledgment Sign shall not contain contact information, directions, slogans, telephone numbers, or internet addresses. A business may elect to have their acknowledgment logo placed on an Acknowledgment Sign. The acknowledgment logo shall be less than 1/3 of total sign surface area. (See Figure 2). Contact the Traffic Operations Division to assist in designing Acknowledgment Signs.
- C. Acknowledgment Sign Programs – Programs that recognize sponsors providing a highway related service by placing an Acknowledgment sign.
- D. Conventional Road – A street or highway other than a freeway or expressway without access control. A conventional road may include the frontage road of freeways.

- E. Freeway and Expressway – A divided highway with partial or full controlled access.
- F. Highway Related Service – A service that supports the enhancement of highway safety, operation, aesthetics, structural integrity of the infrastructure and/or a valuable service to the highway user. Typical services include but are not limited to litter pickup or installing and maintaining landscaping. Monetary donations may be considered in lieu of a physical highway-related service on a case by case basis. Monetary donations must be tied to a specific location and program.
- G. Participant – An individual, company, business, or volunteer group who chooses to provide a highway-related service in exchange for a TxDOT installed and maintained acknowledgment sign.
- H. SHSD - Standard Highway Sign Designs for Texas
- I. Sponsorship Agreement- A long-term agreement between an entity and TxDOT where the entity agrees to provide a service in exchange for an Acknowledgement Sign.
- J. TMUTCD – The Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Section 3. Eligibility

Individuals, companies, businesses, volunteer groups, or other jurisdictions are eligible to participate in programs utilizing Acknowledgment Signs. Participants must comply with all applicable laws concerning the provisions prohibiting discrimination based on race, religion, color, age, sex, and national origin.

Sponsoring entities should provide actual services. A monetary contribution to the highway agency for the value of services the agency itself provides, or contracts for, will be considered on a case by case basis.

A sponsorship agreement must be entered into by TxDOT and the applicant. The sponsorship agreement should be a long-term (multi-year) agreement for an entity to provide ongoing maintenance or operational services and not for a one-time investment of goods or services. The minimum length of time for a sponsorship or adoption should be at least two years.

The services provided under the sponsorship agreement should support the enhancement of highway safety, operation, aesthetics, structural integrity of the infrastructure and/or a valuable service to the highway user.

The services can provide overall support for a facility or a major operation of a facility. The services provided must be site specific.

The sponsorship agreement should not have a primary purpose of generating revenues for sponsors or highway agencies.

Section 4. Placement of Acknowledgment Signs

Acknowledgment signs are intended to be placed on conventional roads. Freeway and expressway placement may be allowed in certain cases if the highway related service does not pose a safety risk. Acknowledgment signs should be placed at or as close as practical to the service being provided. Acknowledgment signs shall be placed on TxDOT approved crashworthy sign supports.

Because regulatory, warning, and guide signs have a higher priority, acknowledgment signs shall only be installed where adequate spacing is available between the acknowledgment sign and other higher priority signs. Acknowledgment signs shall not be installed in a position where they would obscure the road users' view of other traffic control devices.

Acknowledgment signs shall not be installed at any of the following locations:

- A. On the front or back of, adjacent to, or in close proximity to any other traffic control device, including traffic signs, highway traffic signals, and changeable message signs;
- B. On the front or back of, adjacent to, or around the supports or structures of other traffic control devices, or bridge piers; or
- C. At key decision points where a road user's attention is more appropriately focused on other traffic control devices, roadway geometry, or traffic conditions, including exit and entrance ramps, intersections, highway-rail grade crossings, toll plazas, temporary traffic control zones, and areas of limited sight distance.

The minimum spacing between acknowledgment signs and any other traffic control signs, except parking regulation signs, should be:

- A. 150 ft on roadways with speed limits of less than 30 mph,
- B. 200 ft on roadways with speed limits of 30 to 45 mph, and
- C. 500 ft on roadways with speed limits greater than 45 mph.

If the placement of a newly-installed higher-priority traffic control device, such as a higher-priority sign, a highway traffic signal, or a temporary traffic control device, conflicts with an existing acknowledgment sign, the acknowledgment sign should be relocated, covered, or removed.

Section 5. Design and Legibility of Acknowledgment Signs

Acknowledgment signs shall have blue background with white legend and border. Acknowledgment signs should clearly indicate the type of highway services provided by the sponsor. The standard size for Acknowledgment signs is 48 inches x 48 inches.

An acknowledgment logo shall be either an identification symbol/trademark or a word message. The acknowledgment logo shall be placed on a logo panel which shall be attached to the Acknowledgment sign. Symbols or trademarks used alone for an acknowledgment logo shall be reproduced in the colors and general shape consistent with customary use, and any integral legend shall be in proportionate size. An acknowledgment logo that resembles an official traffic control device shall not be used.

A word message acknowledgment logo, not using a symbol or trademark, shall be white legend on blue background and may be integral to the parent sign. Only one acknowledgment logo is allowed per sign.

Where business identification symbols or trademarks are used alone for an acknowledgment logo, the border may be omitted from the acknowledgment logo.

In addition to the general provisions for signs described in Chapter 2A of the TMUTCD and the sign design principles covered in the "Standard Highway Sign Designs for Texas" (SHSD) book (see Section 1A.11 of the TMUTCD), acknowledgment sign designs developed shall comply with the following provisions:

A. Neither the sign design nor the sponsor acknowledgment logo shall contain any contact information, directions, slogans (other than a brief jurisdiction-wide program slogan, if used), telephone numbers, or internet addresses;

B. Except for the lettering, if any, on the sponsor acknowledgment logo, all of the lettering shall be in upper-case letters as provided in the "Standard Highway Signs and Markings" book (see Section 1A.11);

C. In order to keep the main focus on the highway-related service and not on the sponsor acknowledgment logo, the area reserved for the sponsor acknowledgment logo shall not be more than 36 inches x 18 inches;

D. The sign shall not contain any messages, lights, symbols, or trademarks that resemble any official traffic control devices;

E. The sign shall not contain any light-emitting diodes, luminous tubing, fiber optics, luminescent panels, or other flashing, moving, or animated features; and

F. The sign shall not distract from official traffic control messages such as regulatory, warning, or guidance messages.

Acknowledgment signs shall be retroreflective or illuminated to show the same shape and similar color by both day and night, unless specifically stated otherwise in this or other TxDOT policies of a particular sign or group of signs. The requirements for sign illumination shall not be considered to be satisfied by street or highway lighting.

SHSD alphabet fonts provide optimized legibility. If a font other than an SHSD alphabet font (Highway Gothic or Clearview) is used, approval from Traffic Operations Division shall be required.

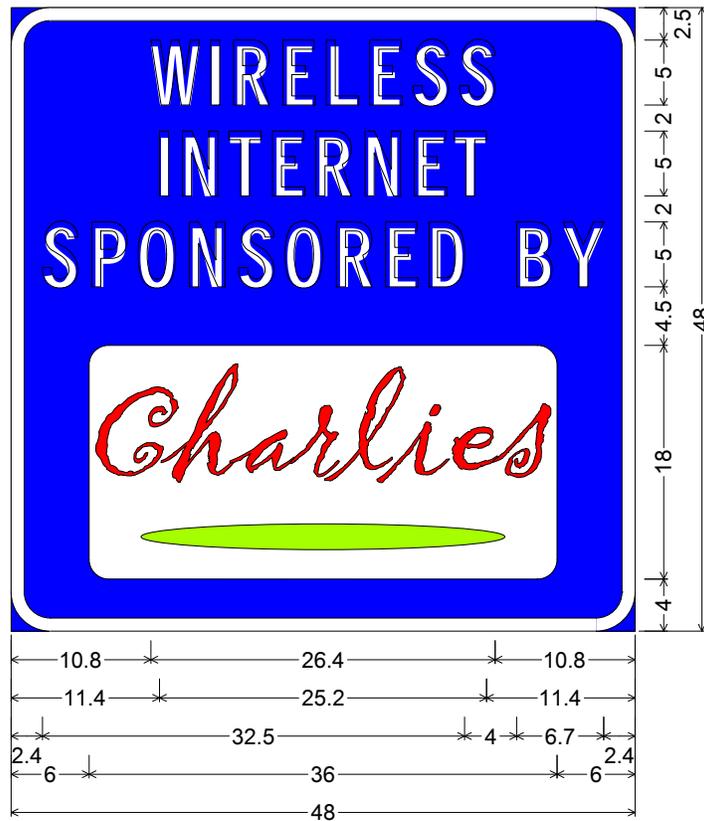
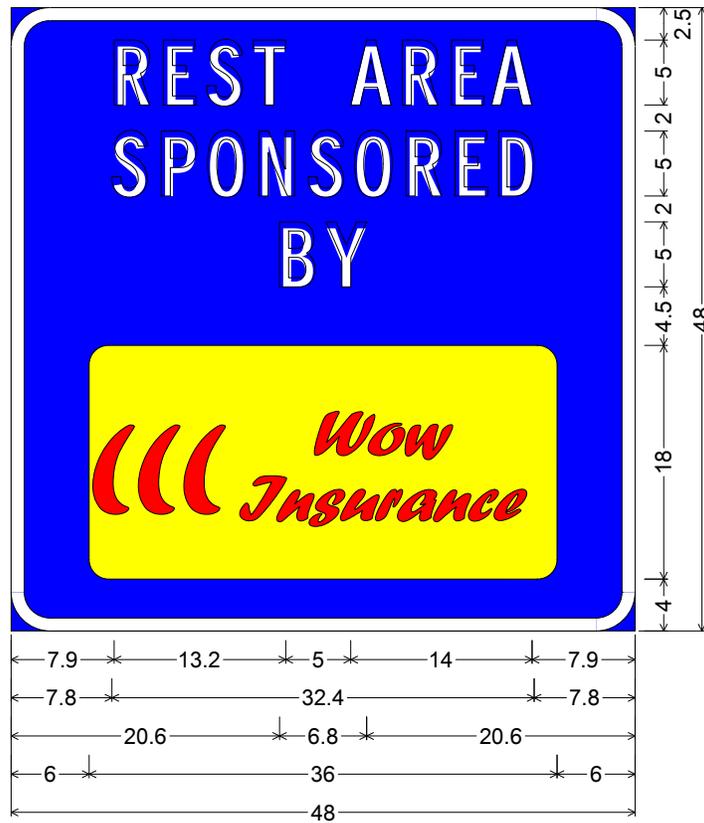


Figure 2