



Traffic Guidelines Manual

ORIGINATOR State Traffic Engineer		2-10-2
CHAPTER 2	Signing	
SECTION 10	Special Events	
SUBJECT 2	Special Events (Roadway Open to Traffic)	

A. Purpose

This policy establishes the signing policy criteria for special events that take place on the highway right-of-way. These are special events that can be conducted with the road open to traffic under certain conditions.

Road closures and detours for special events shall be governed by the guidance in TGM 13-10-1 and DOT Permit Form DT1479. Signing for Special Events off of the State Highway system shall be governed by the guidance in TGM 2-10-3.

The Department receives frequent requests to use the highway right-of-way for various activities. These activities are typically short-term, readily definable activities that fall in two categories:

- roadway or roadside modifications, repairs, or maintenance operations by a local unit of government, or permitted railroad or utility work,
- and certain types of special events, such as marathons, bicycle races, charity walks/runs, filming, etc.

Roadway or roadside operations, including utility work, are regulated under Chapters 90 and 96 of the Maintenance Manual and DOT Permit Form DT1812.

The basis for allowing the use of the highway for these special events is Wisconsin State Statute 349.185, which allows governments in charge of maintaining the highway the authority to regulate community events or celebrations, processions or assemblages on the highways. The word “assemblage” is interpreted to mean that the Department *may* consider activities such as street fairs, bike racing and marathons as legitimate reasons for traffic restrictions, up to and including closing the street and arranging for a detour if the municipality so chooses.

In general, use of the state highway right-of-way for special events will not be allowed unless a legitimate public interest (supported by the Local Government) is served and the activity does not cause safety or capacity problems. Requests for closing and detouring

the highway **shall** come from the municipal government. Special event requests that only require temporary traffic restrictions *may* come from the municipality, individuals, private enterprises or a neighborhood community. In the case where the requestor is that other than a municipality, the requestor shall provide a letter from the affected municipalities as proof that the event is fully coordinated with them. Authorization for usage of the highway right-of-way for special events *may* be granted by the WisDOT Region office in the form of a permit, provided all pertinent criteria covered in these guidelines are satisfied. All closures and restrictions on Corridors 2030 roadways require approval by the Regional Traffic Engineer (RTE) via the Lane Closure Planning System.

B. Definitions

Freeways are defined as divided arterial highway facilities that have fully controlled access at interchanges only. Interstate Highways are freeways with the interstate route designation.

Expressways are defined as divided arterial highway facilities with partially controlled access by a combination of interchanges, at-grade intersections, and driveways.

Conventional Highways are defined as streets or roads other than freeways, expressways, or low-volume roads. They *may* be divided or undivided, two-lane or multi-lane, and access is available at intersections and driveways.

C. General Policy Criteria

1. This policy applies for special events on the state highway right-of-way that are running concurrent with traffic (no road closure or detour). This policy **shall** also apply to Connecting State Highways as it is critical for WisDOT to review these requests for coordination with the Lane Closure System, 511, OSOW, etc. Special events on the highway right-of-way **shall not** be allowed on freeways, expressways or any roadway with a posted speed above 55 mph.
2. FHWA concurrence is required when the special event is on the Interstate Highway system.
3. The permit **shall** identify that the special event requestor agrees to assume the entire responsibility and liability for all damages or injury to all persons, whether employees or otherwise and to all property, arising out of, resulting from or in any manner connected with the operation of the special event. The requestor **shall** provide proof of General Liability Insurance Coverage and **shall** agree to defend and indemnify WisDOT, its agents and employees from all such claims including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, claims for which WisDOT *may* be paid or incurred to enforce the provisions of this paragraph, and the requestor **shall** further agree and pay for such general liability coverage which protects the state as an additional named insured.

4. The requestor *should* submit the permit application to the WisDOT Region Traffic Section at least 90 calendar days in advance of the event.
5. The requestor **shall** be responsible for any damage done to the highway property as a result of the special event.
6. The special event minimum attendance is typically 100 participants. This attendance number includes anticipated spectators.
7. A special event **shall not** occur more than once annually by the same sponsor in the same section of roadway. Special events **shall not** occur more than four times a year in the same section of roadway.
8. WisDOT is responsible for determining whether the event qualifies for special event signs, providing guidance on acceptable signs and placement, reviewing the permit application, and assuring compliance with the permit.
9. The Region Traffic Section will evaluate the safety of any nighttime special event requests.

D. Detailed Policy Criteria

1. Special Events **shall not** be allowed during peak traffic periods, as determined by the WisDOT Region Traffic Engineer.
2. The time duration of the Special Event *should not* exceed four hours or when the last event participant has cleared the roadway.
3. The use of the right-of-way **shall not** interfere with motorists' safe operation of their vehicles.
4. The use of the right-of-way **shall not** obstruct sight distance and **shall not** detract from motorists' view of traffic control devices.
5. A plan for traffic control and documentation of the means to implement it *should* be submitted to the WisDOT Region Traffic Engineer for review and approval at least 90 calendar days in advance of the event.
6. All traffic control signs **shall** be in conformance with the Federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and the Wisconsin Supplement to the MUTCD.
7. Advance notices to the media **shall** be coordinated by the Requestor.
8. All special events **shall** be coordinated with the State Patrol and/or the local law enforcement agency as appropriate, by the requestor. Documentation of this coordination is required.

9. The WisDOT Region Traffic Engineer *should* notify the Region Communications Manager of the Special Event once the attached application form has been completed and signed.
10. Parking **shall not** be allowed on the state highway right-of-way, which includes the shoulders.
11. If the event will take place on highways maintained by other governmental agencies, the Requestor **shall** coordinate the event and provide proof by letter to the WisDOT Region Traffic Engineer that the necessary coordination has taken place with the other governmental agencies.
12. The usage of police powers for special events **shall not** substitute for appropriate signing.

Signing Limitations

The criteria below apply for signing on the specific roadway where the event is held. Advanced directional signing for special events is covered under TGM 2-10-3.

1. No commercial advertising is allowed on the signs. The inclusion of a brand name within the name of an event, such as “Brand X Racing Event” is permissible. The sign message *may* include the word “Event” or “Parking”. Event names on signs *should* be as clear and concise as possible. Pictographs **shall not** be allowed on the signs, per interpretation of the MUTCD and guidance from FHWA.
2. The signing layout detail and installation locations **shall** be approved by the Regional Traffic Section and Bureau of Highway Operations.
3. Guidance signs with red, orange, yellow, or fluorescent yellow-green background **shall not** be used. Temporary work zone warning signs **shall** be fluorescent orange. Sign base material **shall** consist of plywood or sheet aluminum. If banners are used, they must meet the requirements of the TGM policy on banners (TGM 13-12-1). Posts **shall** be of an approved type for highway signs per WISDOT standards. Signs **shall** be manufactured by a fabricator who has been in the traffic signing business for a minimum of three years.
4. Letter size, font, and spacing **shall** meet MUTCD guidelines. Minimum of 6” upper case letters and 4 ½” lower case letters **shall** be used.
5. If the event takes place at night, the signs **shall** be high intensity, retroreflective.
6. Changeable message signs *may* be used, subject to WisDOT policy requirements for use of changeable message signs. The Regional Traffic Section **shall** approve the message content, letter height, and sign location as specified in TGM 17-2-1. Larger letter heights are needed on changeable message signs for readability. Refer to the TGM 17-2-1 for additional provisions regarding PCMS usage.

7. Pre-event signing *may* be required up to 10 days in advance of the special event. The signing layout and installation details for pre-event signing **shall** be approved by the Regional Traffic Section and the Bureau of Traffic Operations.

Implementation/Cost

1. The event organization or requesting group **shall** pay for all costs associated with the special event signing including costs to obtain the permit, which *may* include WisDOT review costs, any costs to acquire, install, and remove the special event signs, including changeable message signs, and any additional costs incurred by the Department. The event organizer will be responsible for obtaining signs that conform to Department standards and arranging to have those signs placed, operated, and removed consistent with the terms of the permit. All work on the highway right of way must be performed by a contractor or local government agency approved by WisDOT.
2. Installation by county forces *may* be an option in some situations. When that occurs, all costs are charged back to the requesting organization.

Permittee must provide a certificate of insurance as evidence of an existing Comprehensive or Commercial General Liability Policy, including contractual liability coverage, with limits not less than \$500,000 combined single limit for all claims arising out of a single accident or occurrence, and naming the State of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Department of Transportation as additional insured.

PERMITTEE SHALL DEFEND, HOLD HARMLESS AND INDEMNIFY THE STATE OF WISCONSIN, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, AND IT'S OFFICERS, AGENTS, EMPLOYEES, AND MEMBERS FOR ALL SUITS OR ACTIONS THAT MAY RESULT FROM ANY ACTIVITY BY THE PERMITTEE, IT'S OFFICERS, SUBCONTRACTORS, AGENTS OR EMPLOYEES.

Name (Please Print)

Signature

Date (minimum of 90 days prior to event)

APPROVED **DENIED**

Regional Traffic Engineer or designee signature

DATE

APPROVED **DENIED**

Regional Maintenance Engineer or designee signature

DATE

Attachment- Copy of letter from municipality (if applicable)