



# Traffic Engineering, Operations & Safety Manual

## Chapter 13 Traffic Regulations

### Section 12 Permits for Temporary Banners and Civic Displays

13-12-1 Policy

January 2014

#### GENERAL

Communities *may* request permits to install banners and/or civic displays to promote special events or to display civic pride. These banners/displays can provide a very effective and efficient means to convey a message to the motorist, and when used correctly can provide a positive effect for the flow of traffic, and ultimately traffic safety.

The MUTCD, Section [1A.01](#) and Wisconsin State Statute 86.19 clearly state that advertising messages **shall not** appear on traffic control devices. Even though banners and civic displays are not considered traffic control devices and are not used to control traffic, they can compete with essential traffic control signs. Therefore, careful consideration must be taken to provide signs and messages which do not conflict with these rules or have a negative impact on traffic safety.

Regional Transportation directors, or their designees, *may* approve or deny applications for permission to install temporary banners or civic displays. Applicants *may* be municipalities, or private entities who must receive endorsement from the respective municipality. Approval **shall** be by means of the standard form. Denial *should* be by letter, giving reasons for rejection.

#### DEFINITIONS

Banners are defined as flexible, horizontal signs that are either overhead or ground mounted displays that *may* promote public activities such as parades, celebrations, speeches, concerts, plays, musicals, contests, athletic events and charitable events. Banners are considered short-term and are removed once the event has completed.

Civic Displays are considered a permanent decorative feature installed by the community to promote civic pride and are not associated with a special event. Examples of civic displays include:

- Decorations on light poles, including wrapping
- Community achievements
- Holiday decorations
- Civic mottos or emblems
- Seasonal messages
- Extra enforcement locations, such as EZ Wrap

Freeways are defined as divided highways with fully controlled access at interchanges only. Interstate Highways are freeways with the interstate route designation.

Expressways are defined as divided highways 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 or expressways. They *may* be divided or undivided, two-lane or multi-lane, and access is available at intersections and driveways.

#### POLICY

1. Banners and civic displays **shall not** display commercial advertising or advertise specific commercial products, services or businesses. The inclusion of a brand name within the name of an event, such as "Brand X Bike Race" is permissible.
2. Lettering on banners **shall** be a minimum of 4" in height and overhead banners **shall** have a minimum clearance of 17 feet (bottom of banner to top of roadway).
3. All banners **shall** be made out of a flexible material, and have no horizontal stiffeners, except banners supported on overpasses. Civic displays *may* be made out of a rigid material.
4. Banners and civic displays **shall not** be permitted on freeways or expressways.
5. Banners and civic displays **shall** be removed or replaced when legibility is impaired due to wear or fading.
6. Any new posts installed for banners or civic displays **shall** be NCHRP 350 crash compliant.

7. Maximum length of time for banners promoting community events is 30 days and 90 days for community promotion. Civic displays *may* be installed indefinitely, provided they remain in good shape.
8. Banners and civic displays **shall not** be installed on existing traffic control devices or supports.
9. The applicant **shall** accept full responsibility for any damage claims from any permitted banner or civic display.
10. Banners located in the highway right-of-way *should* be located as close to the right-of-way line as possible.



**TEMPORARY BANNER / CIVIC DISPLAY INSTALLATION APPLICATION / PERMIT**

Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
 DT1876 1/2014 (Replaces ET717) s.86.19(2) Wis. Stats.

Submit application in duplicate to the Division of Transportation System Development Regional Office, Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT). A single application may be made for each associated pair of temporary banners or group of civic displays.

Applicant – <i>If applicant is not a municipality, indicate endorsement below by responsible municipal official.</i>	
Contact Person Name	(Area Code) Telephone Number
Mailing Address, City, State and ZIP Code	Email Address
Wording on Banner	
Location(s) Highway Number	At
	And At
Date To Be Erected	Date To Be Removed

The undersigned applicant requests permission to install temporary banner(s) and/or civic displays at the above location(s). It is understood and agreed that the applicant shall comply with the general and specific conditions stated below and/or attached. The undersigned certifies that he/she is authorized to sign this application on behalf of the named applicant.

**X**  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Applicant or Authorized Representative Signature) (Date – m/d/yyyy)

Representative Title
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**X**  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Municipal Endorsement Signature)

Municipal Title
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**CONDITIONS**

1. A banner is defined as a flexible, horizontal sign extending with its rope or cable supports across an entire roadway.
2. The lettering on banners shall be at least 4 inches in height and the minimum clearance to ground on overhead banners shall be 17 feet.
3. The banner shall not be made of rigid material, and shall have no horizontal stiffeners, except that it may be supported on an overpass. Civic displays may be made of ridged material.
4. Banners and civic displays shall not be permitted over Interstate highways, freeways or expressways.
5. Banners and civic displays shall be removed or replaced when legibility is impaired due to wear or fading.
6. Permitted maximum length of time for banner displays is 30 days for events, and 90 days for community promotion.
7. No banner or civic displays shall be installed using state-owned supports.
8. If new supports are installed to support an overhead banner or any civic display, the applicant shall review the proposed installation with the Regional Traffic Engineer.
9. The applicant shall accept full responsibility for any damage claims resulting from any permitted banner or civic displays.
10. Owners of banners or civic displays which do not conform to the stated conditions are subject to penalty as provided in s.86.19(3) Wis. Stats.
11. Notwithstanding the preceding, no banner or civic display shall display commercial advertising or advertise specific commercial products, services or businesses. The inclusion of a brand name within the name of an event, such as "Brand X Bike Race" is permissible on banners.
12. The applicant shall provide certification, by a Professional Engineer, that any banners or civic displays installed on lighting supports shall meet wind loading requirements.
13. Other conditions:  No  Yes  On Reverse  Attached

**PERMIT** Approved for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Permit Number
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**X**  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
 (WisDOT Representative Signature) (Date – m/d/yyyy)

Print Name and Title
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