

## CHAPTER FIVE

# Placement of Political Signs – Letter from MaineDOT



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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 129<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> and another 6 weeks between July 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup>. 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, and Route 1 between Bath and Brunswick including 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 its ramps and the portion of Route 1 between Bath and Brunswick are not signed. The signage denoted here is for 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.), on all utility poles and trees, on islands within a rotary/roundabout, and in medians/islands in the center of the road that are fewer than six 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 for 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 on 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](mailto:meghan.russo@maine.gov) or 207-624-3558.

MaineDOT appreciates your cooperation in this effort.

Sincerely,



Stephen Landry, P.E.  
State Traffic Engineer  
MaineDOT