

A message from the County Board of Road Commissioners

The Washtenaw County Board of Road Commissioners, **David E. Rutledge**, **Tim Eder** and **Fred Veigel** would like to remind citizens of the most important reason why the placement of any sign within the right-of-way is prohibited.

“Our foremost concern is always the safety of the traveling public,” states Chair of the Board, Commissioner David Rutledge. *“That is why we have directed our road crews to remove any and all signs that are judged to be a distraction or traffic hazard and are illegally placed within the road rights-of-way. It is not the desire of the Road Commission staff to confiscate your signs, but we will do so in order to maintain the safety of the roadways.”*

“However, with the distribution of this publication we also take this opportunity to call upon the cooperation of local citizens, business owners, political candidates, church and civic groups, associations and others, to help us with this safety enforcement by not placing your signs in inappropriate, unsafe locations. It is our sincere hope, that with our combined efforts, the Road Commission will continue to provide a road system that is reasonably safe and convenient to the traveling public.”

Removed signs will be disposed of immediately

Signs removed from the road rights-of-way will be **disposed of immediately** by the Washtenaw County Road Commission. Please be advised that signs will no longer be taken to the Road Commission and retained for retrieval by the owner.

Washtenaw County Road Commission
555 N. Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103



TO:



Washtenaw County Road Commission



Sign Removal Policy

Why the placement of signs in the road right-of-way is prohibited...

Sign Removal Policy

In keeping with the past practices of the Road Commission, and in the interest of public safety and uniformity, on September 7, 2004, the **Washtenaw County Board of Road Commissioners** adopted a formal **"Sign Removal Policy"** that authorizes Road Commission staff to remove any and all signs that are judged to be a distraction or traffic hazard and are illegally placed within the road rights-of-way. On February 8, 2005, the policy was amended as follows:

Adopted Per Resolution No. RC04-306

Amended Per Resolution No. RC05-051:

"...signs that are placed within the rights-of-way on the Washtenaw County Primary and Local Road Systems, which are under the direct jurisdiction and authority of the Washtenaw County Board of Road Commissioners, and/or within the rights-of-way on the State Trunkline Systems, which are under the direct jurisdiction and control of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), are subject to removal by the Washtenaw County Road Commission, without notice, as provided by MCL 257.615. The removed signs shall be disposed of immediately by the Washtenaw County Road Commission."

Purpose of Enforcement

Large collections of signs in one area are typically of little benefit to the hopeful business advertiser, real estate agent, political candidate and/or citizen having a garage sale, and can often create a distraction to the traveling public or cause dangerous sight distance problems at intersections and driveway approaches. Additionally, signs can obscure directional and regulatory highway signage (also causing a potential hazard to motorists).

These signs also make it very difficult and hazardous for road crews to mow and maintain rights-of-way, as well as quickly creating an added expense to the Road Commission when crews must be dispatched to remove them.

By avoiding the placement of signs where they can obscure the vision of motorists or cause confusion with traffic signs that are pertinent to traffic control, you will be adhering to the Road Commission's policy, as well as to the **Michigan Vehicle Code, MCL 257.615**, (see below), which regulates the placement of signs within the road rights-of-way.

Other Jurisdictions

Out of concern that roadside signs may become a hazard in obstructing motorists' views or make it difficult to pull off the road in an emergency situation, many townships, cities and villages have adopted their own ordinances that prohibit the placement of signs within rights-of-way or along sidewalks and/or non-motorized paths. Therefore, it is wise to consult your local governmental agency to verify if such an ordinance or regulation exists and what type of restrictions it contains.



Typical example of signs placed in the right-of-way that can distract and obstruct the vision of motorists.

Additionally, per the **State Highway Advertising Act, Public Act 106 of 1972**, (see below), the Road Commission, by authority of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), may remove signs that are placed in the rights-of-way along the **State Trunkline Systems**, which, in Washtenaw County, includes: I-94, US-23, US-12, M-14, M-17, M-52, and M-153.

Michigan Vehicle Code

The **Michigan Vehicle Code, Public Act 300 of 1949, Section 257.615**, prohibits the placement of any signs in the road right-of-way that may distract or obstruct the view of the public to see traffic enforcement signs, that blink or resemble traffic control devices and/or that may create a hazard.

The Michigan Vehicle Code further provides that **the public authority** having jurisdiction over the highway, (a road commission), **is empowered to remove from the right-of-way any such sign as a public nuisance.**

A Rule of Thumb...

When in doubt, the safest assumption is to place your signs...

- ✓ Behind sidewalks or utility poles, as these are typically located near the edge of the road rights-of-way.
- ✓ If no utility poles or sidewalks are present, then place your signs a minimum of 33 feet from the center of a two-lane road, and/or 60 feet from the center of a three-or-more-lane highway. This is typically considered to be a reasonably safe and adequate distance from the road and legally out of right-of-way areas.

Highway Advertising Act

The **State of Michigan Highway Advertising Act, Public Act 106 of 1972**, also prohibits the placement of signs along state roads and major highways, without the issuance of a permit from the Michigan Department of Transportation.

Per **Section 252.318**, this Act prohibits the placement of signs or sign structures that prevent the driver of a motor vehicle from having a clear and unobstructed view of approaching, intersecting or merging traffic. It also prohibits signs that are abandoned, in poor repair and/or that interfere with or resemble any official traffic sign, signal or device.