

Changeable Message Signs are limited to eight characters per line (including spaces and punctuation marks) and three lines per screen. Drivers should be able to read the entire message twice before passing it, so messages should be limited to two screens. The messages are to advise the public of traffic conditions, NOT to advertise non-traffic events. The wording is determined by national and state standards.

The following are some acceptable traffic advisement messages:



The following messages would NOT BE PERMITTED since they are promotions:



These signs are considered "deadly fixed objects" and should be placed so that exposure to traffic is minimized. Time permitting, MaineDOT can review proposed sign locations.



MaineDOT wants to help municipalities plan for road closures in a way that minimizes disruption and enhances safety for motorists and pedestrians. Please share this brochure with event organizers and municipal officials so that everyone in your community is aware of the many factors involved in planned road closures.



Please notify the Chief Engineer's office at MaineDOT to ensure that the department has advance warning of closures lasting longer than 20 minutes. It is also important to provide specifics about the detour route in case there are planned construction activities along that route. **Thank You!**

*Chief Engineer, MaineDOT  
16 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333  
Tel: 624-3000  
email: [mainedot@maine.gov](mailto:mainedot@maine.gov)*

\* **29-A §2078: Emergency Rule** - For public safety or convenience, during a fire, accident, emergency or special event, a law enforcement officer may temporarily close a way to vehicular traffic or to vehicles of a certain description, or divert pedestrian or vehicular traffic.



**ROAD CLOSURE**  
When a "special event" in your community requires a planned road closure





*Communities across Maine often have reason to celebrate with parades, bike races, festivals and fairs. Special notifications must take place when a committee or organization requests that a state road be closed for more than 20 minutes. Here's some guidance to ensure that planned road closures, on state or state-aid roads, can happen safely, conveniently and legally.*

A "law enforcement officer" is the ultimate authority prior to, during and after any community event.\* If a municipality has no police department and the county or state police are not available, then the municipal officers should enact a traffic ordinance specific to road closures.

**In cases involving an interstate ramp closure, the following are mandatory:**

- Council/Selectmen sign-off
- Local fire, safety and police sign-off
- State Police sign-off

In cases of a planned road closure greater than 20 minutes, a Closure Plan or Traffic Control Plan should be developed and shared with MaineDOT's Chief Engineer.

The plans should be developed by the municipality or, in areas with no town government, by the county commissioners.

**Closure Plan-** The Closure Plan should be in writing and should include the time and date of the event, as well as the names and phone numbers of emergency and law enforcement contacts. A Closure Plan should also include a "Plan of Action" that indicates specific times of set up & removal of signage, an explanation of how emergencies will be handled, and a list of emergency vehicles that will be on site. The closure plan must be:

- Approved by the municipality (council, selectmen, manager or administrator)
- Approved by law enforcement (local, county or state)
- Shared with MaineDOT's Chief Engineer

**Traffic Control Plan-** A Traffic Control Plan is a required part of a Closure Plan. However the Traffic Control Plan should ensure the safety of all road users: vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians, including those with disabilities.

A Traffic Control Plan may be requested even if there is not a full closure greater than 20 minutes. For example if there is a lane closure and traffic is being detoured, a Traffic Control Plan will be requested. The plan should include:

- Specifics about the trained personnel who are needed to oversee both on-site traffic control and the detour traffic control.
- Detour signs that direct motorists from the closure and then back to the opposing side of the closure.
- Changeable Message Signs (CMS) that are used for closures longer than 60 minutes, and on roads with an average annual daily traffic volume of more than 5,000 vehicles per day. The event organizer is responsible for CMS rentals.



**Advance Notice-** Public outreach should take place at least five days prior to a closure and is the responsibility of the organization sponsoring the event. In addition to promoting the event to participants, the event should be promoted to motorists.

Suggested methods for notifying motorists include:

- Local media
- Event posters (including maps, dates and times) that are placed at municipal offices and other businesses along the route.
- Stationary Advanced Warning Signs indicating that there is a road closure ahead. If possible, signage should be placed far enough in advance so drivers are not "trapped" by the closure.
- Changeable Message Signs (CMS) that should be up and running at least one week in advance of the event to adequately notify the public. The event organizer is responsible for renting message boards and MaineDOT should be consulted about placement.