**17 DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**229 OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER**

**Chapter 208: RULES FOR THE SELECTION OF INTERCHANGE AND SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDE SIGNS**

**SUMMARY:** Title 23 §1912- C grants the authority to place interchange guide signs on the interstate system for the sole purpose to guide travelers to destinations of local, regional and statewide interest. Interchange guide signs and supplemental guide signs may be placed by a signing agency at strategic points on the interstate system beside the traffic lanes approaching an exit if the placement complies with this section and with national standards. All determinations regarding whether the placement of interchange guide signs or supplemental guide signs on the interstate system meets the standards contained in this section must be made by the signing agency. The purpose of these rules is to regulate the installation and selection of Interchange and Supplemental Guide Signs on portions of the interstate highway system. These rules establish the size, shape, manner and location of Interchange and Supplemental Guide signs and describe the eligibility for any entity to formally request the Department to erect an Interchange or Supplemental Guide Sign.

Section 1 - Background

The *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways* (MUTCD) is the national standard for traffic control devices on all roads open to public travel. The MUTCD (http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/) contains the standards for signing freeways and expressways for motorists who are unfamiliar with an area, but who are traveling between and through the Nation’s principal traffic generating centers.

The selection of information to be presented at an interchange is critical to the safe and efficient use of the highway system. The MUTCD provides mandatory requirements for installing many freeway and expressway signs, but leaves other signing discretion to the States. One of these discretions is the selection of destinations to be used on major (interchange) guide signs and Supplemental Guide signs. Numerous facilities that warrant inclusion on supplemental guide signs, and the addition of new facilities, have posed signing problems in many states.

The MUTCD incorporates by reference the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guidelines for the Selection of Supplemental Guide Signs for Traffic Generators adjacent to freeways. The guidelines contained herein were modeled on the recommendations found within the AASHTO guidance in selecting the most appropriate generators for display on freeway and expressway supplemental guide signs.

It is imperative to note that the most important guidance information for any interchange along freeways and expressways is provided on the Advance Guide Signs and Exit Direction Signs. These signs inform motorists of the route(s) and principle destination(s) accessible from an interchange. In general, that information is limited to the municipality and route name at the interchange, along with major destination points remote from, but accessible from the interchange. These signs should not be used to describe specific traffic generators unless the purpose of the interchange is primarily to provide access to that generator.

**Section 2 - Definitions**

As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

1. "Advance guide sign" means a sign described in the national standards that identifies the principal destinations and routes served by an exit and the distance to that exit.

B. "Authority" means the Maine Turnpike Authority.

C. "College or university" means an accredited institution providing postsecondary education that has authorization to confer a degree in accordance with Title 20-A, chapter 409.

D. "Department" means the Department of Transportation.

E. "Exit directional sign" means an exit sign that repeats the route and destination information that is displayed on an advance guide sign for that exit.

F. "Interchange guide sign" means an advance guide sign or exit directional sign.

G. "Military installation" means a facility that is owned by the Federal Government and is operated by a branch of the United States Armed Forces.

H. "National standard" means the latest version of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices approved by the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration in accordance with 23 United States Code and the latest version of the Guidelines for the Selection of Supplemental Guide Signs for Traffic Generators Adjacent to Freeways published by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

I. "Signing agency" means, with respect to signs proposed to be placed along the state-constructed and state-maintained interstate system, the department and, with respect to signs proposed to be placed along the Maine Turnpike, the authority.

J. "State park" means any area of land or an interest in land, with or without improvements, that is designated as a state park, that is acquired by or under the control of the State and that is managed primarily for public recreation or conservation purposes.

K. "Supplemental guide sign" means a sign used to provide information regarding destinations accessible from an exit other than places displayed on an interchange guide sign.

L. "Transportation facility" means a bus, train, air, ship or ferry terminal, a park and ride lot or an intermodal transportation facility.

M. "Veterans, police or firefighters memorial" means a veterans cemetery or a memorial honoring veterans, firefighters or police officers if the cemetery or memorial is maintained and funded by a state or federal agency.

**Section 3 - Interchange Guide Signs**

The MUTCD guidance indicates that no more than two destinations should be displayed on any Advance Guide sign or Exit Direction sign. In addition the sign legend should not exceed three lines of copy, exclusive of the exit number and action or distance information.

Destinations selected by the Department’s traffic engineers for inclusion on an interchange guide sign are limited to the municipality and/or route/road name at the interchange, or a major destination point where the purpose of the interchange is primarily to provide access to that generator. Unless otherwise allowed by the signing agency, advance guide signs must be placed from ½ mile to 2 miles in advance of the exit.

In addition to the municipality that the interchange is in or the route/road name or major generator that the interchange connects to, the Department may select a secondary destination displayed on the interchange guide signs. Typically one of the following secondary destinations will be selected by the Department:

(A) The municipality with the largest population within 5 miles of the exit that has a highway that is classified as an arterial or major collector providing a direct connection from the exit to the municipality's population center or business district;

(B) A municipality with a population of at least 2,000 that is located within 5 miles of the exit, that has a highway that is classified as an arterial or a major collector providing a connection from the exit to the municipality's population center or business district if a portion of the interstate system passes through that municipality;

(C) A municipality that is located within 10 miles of the exit, that has a highway that is classified as an arterial or major collector providing a direct connection from the exit to the municipality's population center or business district and that has a population of at least 10,000;

(D) Another municipality that is considered a major destination if its inclusion would benefit travelers; or

(E) A major destination, other than a municipality, that is directly connected to the exit if its inclusion would benefit travelers.

(F) An interchange guide sign may bear the name of a specific destination if the primary purpose of the exit is to provide access to that destination.

**Section 4 - Supplemental Guide Signs**

Supplemental Guide signs can be used to provide information regarding destinations accessible from an interchange other than places displayed on the standard interchange signing; however, they should only be used in the context of providing a service to the motorist. As there are often far more traffic generators accessible from an interchange than can reasonably be accommodated on directional signage, it is necessary to limit signage to the most significant generators. Otherwise, the result can be an assortment of directional signage that, while serving the interest of a particular destination, provides a disservice to the motorist.

In accordance with the MUTCD guidance, no more than one supplemental guide sign should be used on each interchange approach. No more than two destinations/generators should be listed on a Supplemental Guide sign. When used, Supplemental Guide signs for destinations should be located in advance of the interchanging road that provides the most direct route to the facility. When more than two traffic generators meet the signing criteria, only those generators having the greatest traffic for signing should be considered for display on a Supplemental Guide sign. Signing for a traffic generator should not be displayed on a supplemental guide sign until signing has been installed at the ramp terminals and along the interchanging road and the other roads as necessary to direct the motorist from the freeway to the traffic generator.

Only those generators which have the greatest traffic should be considered for display on Supplemental Guide signs. This does not mean that all facilities that meet the criteria should automatically receive Supplemental Guide signing. Signing for traffic generators is considered optional and supplemental to the overall signing system for freeways. Therefore, before a sign for a traffic generator is installed, sufficient space should exist to accommodate the placement of the sign without interfering or conflicting with required signing or other optional signing that might be in place.

The following conditions will also apply to the installation of Supplemental Guide signs:

1. Sufficient longitudinal space should exist to accommodate the placement of the sign without interfering or conflicting with the necessary traffic control devices.
2. Signage for municipalities and transportation facilities including Park ‘N Rides should take priority over signage for other generators.
3. Not more than one supplemental guide sign for a traffic destination/generator should be provided in one direction.
4. No more than one supplemental guide sign should be used on each interchange approach.
5. Signs shall be located in advance of the interchange that provides the most direct or convenient route to the facility. The exception to this will be in areas where there are multiple interchanges within one municipality in which case signs can be placed prior to the first interchange at the Department’s discretion. As determined by the Department, supplemental guide signs may be placed in advance of interchanges in order to provide guidance to a motorist regarding a preferred route/exit in order to avoid congestion and potential traffic choke points.
6. Traffic generators should not be displayed on a supplemental guide sign until signing has been installed at the ramp terminals and along the intersecting road and other roads as necessary to direct the motorist from the Interstate to the facility. This signing will normally be the responsibility of the Department, the municipalities or the traffic generator.

The MUTCD has included a Specific Service sign category for attractions beginning with the 2000 Millennium edition. This category provides a means for to provide sign presence for qualifying attractions with Specific Service signs (Logo signs). This would also provide for as many as twelve qualifying attractions at an interchange versus the desired limit of two generators on a Supplemental Guide sign. The Department has a Logo Program which is outlined in Chapter 206 of the Secretary of State’s, State Agency Rules. Any specific service or attraction that qualifies for a logo sign will not be eligible for a supplemental guide sign unless that specific service or attraction’s name is readily recognized as defining a major recreational area (as defined on P. 4 of this policy) and including it on the Major Recreational signage would provide service to the motorist and avoid driver confusion.

**Section 5 - Supplemental Guide Sign Criteria**

Signing for traffic generators is considered supplemental to the overall signing as provided Section 2E-28 of the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*. “Guideline Criteria for Signing Traffic Generators” (Table II) have been established so that facilities which generate the greatest need for information by motorists will receive priority in the use of supplemental guide signs.

Other generators that may qualify for signing on the conventional highway system are not normally of interest to the freeway or expressway user or critical to navigational guidance for a significant proportion of freeway or expressway users. Table 1 is not all-inclusive, but provides an indication of the type of facilities not warranting signs.

Supplemental Guide signs may be installed in advance of interchanges for the following destinations accessible from the interchange where the specific criteria of Table II are satisfied:

1. Major colleges and universities
2. Major military installations
3. Federal and State Parks
4. Major recreational areas
5. Other Municipalities
6. Airports & other transportation facilities that significantly benefit the Transportation system
7. Veterans Memorials and Cemeteries

A Major Recreational Area is defined as:

1. Major public beaches or lake access open to public, allow swimming for all ages, have public parking for a minimum of 100 vehicles, provide public sanitary facilities (restrooms) on or adjacent to beach, and lifeguard on duty during peak season (July & August).; **OR**
2. Major ski areas with minimum Vertical Drop of 1,000 feet and 40 maintained trails or is within 10 miles of the exit, has a minimum vertical drop of 200 feet with 10 or more maintained trails and has an aerial lift servicing groomed trails; **OR**

3. Have generated at least 1% of the State's total sales subject to the taxes under Title 36, section 1811 on the value of liquor sold in licensed establishments as defined in Title 28-A, section 2, subsection 15, prepared food and rental of living quarters in any hotel, rooming house or tourist or trailer camp over the previous 3 years and must offer recreational opportunities of sufficient traffic significance to warrant signs in accordance with the criteria below. A geographical area that contains at least 15 of the 19 activities/attractions listed and defined in table III including where some attractions in the area are eligible for a logo sign BUT including the geographical area on a single supplemental guide sign would benefit drivers and avoid confusion. The area must be served by a state arterial/major collector highway and must not already be identified by an existing interchange guide sign for the municipality or major destination point as described in the guidelines above.

**Section 6 - Other Municipalities**

Municipalities selected by the Department for inclusion on an interchange guide sign are limited to two destinations. The Department may evaluate a municipality supplemental signage utilizing the same criteria as outlined above under the Interchange Guide Sign section.

In addition other municipalities would also be considered for signage with a supplemental guide sign if population was over 25,000, within 50 miles, and has a state arterial/major collector providing a direct connection from the interchange to the municipality population center.

Section 7 - Other Transportation Facilities

Other transportation related facilities may be signed as the Department deems appropriate. Most transportation facilities will be granted General Information and Miscellaneous Information Signs as defined in Chapter 2 of the MUTCD.

Section 8 - Veterans Memorials and Cemeteries’

Veteran Cemeteries, Fire-fighter, Police officer and Veteran’s Memorials that are maintained and funded by State or Federal agencies may be included on supplemental guide signs.

**Table I**

**Traffic Generators That Do Not Warrant Signing**

**Businesses\*\*** **Schools**

TV/Radio Stations Grade/High

Theaters Vocational/Trade

Motels/Hotels/Inns\* Seminaries

Trailer Parks\* Private

Industrial Parks & Plants

Shopping Center

**Cemeteries** **Historical\*\***

Local or State Homes and Buildings

Private/Public Privately Owned Facilities

**Communities** **Medical\*\***

Local Civic Centers Mental Facilities

Libraries Research Facilities

Churches

Subdivisions Sanitariums

Infirmaries or Treatment Centers

**Governmental** Veterans Facilities

Research/Experimental County, Fraternal, or Nursing Homes

County and City Facilities Retirement Facilities

Courthouses Humane Facilities

Driver’s License Centers Emergency Medical Services\*

Highway Buildings

Jails/Prisons **Military**

Civil Defense Facilities Armories

Maintenance Facilities Arsenals

Power Plants Sites or detachments

**Recreational/Conservational\*\***

Country Clubs and Golf Courses

Points of Interest

Camps: Scout, Church, 4H, Youth and YMCA/YWCA

Tree Nurseries/Arboretums

Fish Hatcheries, Game Farms, Preserves and Refuges

\* Items may be included on Generic Motorist Service Signs(GAS-FOOD-LODGING-HOSPITAL-CAMPING)

\*\* Items may be included on Specific Service Signs(attractions-Logo signs) consistent with the MTA Policy

**Table II**

**Guideline Criteria for Signing Traffic Generators**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **(All criteria must be met to qualify for consideration of a sign)**  **Type of Generator** | **Specific Criteria** |  | **Minimum Number** |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Major Recreational Area** | Distance from Interchange |  | 100 Miles |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | | **Local** | **Regional** |
| **Colleges**  **&**  **Universities** | Total Enrollment Full & Part Time Students  (attending classes on site) | 300 | 1,000 |
| Distance from Interchange | 15 miles | Unlimited |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Military**  **Bases** | No. of Employees & Permanently Assigned Military Personnel |  | 2,000 |
| Distance from Interchange |  | 10 miles |
|  | | | |
|  | |  |  |
| **State sponsored Veteran’s Memorials and Veteran’s Cemeteries** |  |  |  |
| Distance from Interchange |  | 20 miles |
|  | | | |
| **Federal and State Parks** |  | **Local** | **Regional** |
| Annual Attendance | 25,000 | 75,000 |
| Distance from Interchange | 10 Miles | 120 Miles |

**TABLE III: Recreational activities and attractions**

**Antiquing –** Antiquing is a particular form of shopping wherein the shopper is in search of works of art, pieces of furniture, decorative objects or the like that are old and often valuable. For a location to be considered an antiquing destination, it must have three or more antique dealers registered with the Maine Antique Dealers Association (MADA) and a store at that location.

**Beaches** – Must be open to public, allow swimming for all ages, have adequate public parking, provide public sanitary facilities (restrooms) on or adjacent to beach, and lifeguard on duty during peak season (July & August).[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Bed & Breakfasts/Cottage rentals/Romantic Getaways/Spa Resorts** – Must be available 7 days a week, be licensed by applicable state or local agency, provide adequate sleeping accommodations, provide modern sanitary facilities and have adequate off-street parking for customers.

**Botanical Gardens and Landscapes- significant areas of man-made gardens and landscapes built and maintained for public viewing** , *must be open to the public at least 3 continuous months of the year, and have adequate parking and sanitary facilities.*

**Camping/Campgrounds/Sporting camp rentals/summer camp rentals** – Must be open at least 3 months of the year, be licensed by applicable state or local agency, provide sanitary facilities and potable water, and have adequate parking for customers.

**Cultural sites including Museums/Theaters** *- Locations such as museums and theaters that are primarily concerned with the areas of art, architecture, historical and religion and that shape or define a peoples’ regional or ethnic identity. Must be open to the public at least 3 continuous months of the year, and have adequate parking and sanitary facilities.*

**Fairgrounds/Fairs** - An outdoor area that must hold an agricultural fair annually in this location, and must have adequate parking and sanitary facilities for its visitors.

**Forts & State/National Historic Sites-** Forts are a defensive location characterized by man-made fortifications such as block houses, walls, caponiers, ramparts and casemates and which was originally designed to house troops or a gun battery for the purpose of protecting an area of perceived strategic importance. State/National Historic Sitesare protected areas of national or state historical significance that are owned and staffed by either the state or federal government.

**Golf Courses- Minimum 18 hole course open to the public 7 days per week during May to October**

**Guided trips (registered Maine guide)- guided wilderness trips offered for a fee by Registered Maine Guide, including hunting, fishing, trail, snow or water related, or other professional Maine guide services**

**River/Lake/Ocean access with Canoeing/Kayaking/Fishing/Boating/Sailing-** must have adequate public parking and boat landing area to accommodate customers. [[2]](#footnote-2)

**Scenic Byways** – Scenic Byways shall be defined as those roadways identified by the MaineDOT as Maine Scenic Byways, National Scenic Byways or All American Roads as listed below:

Blackwoods (Route 182, Major Collector)

Fish River (Route 11, Major Collector)

Grafton Notch (Route 26, Major Collector)

Katahdin Woods & Waters (formerly Grindstone, Routes 11, 157, 159 – Minor Arterial/Minor Collector /Major Collector)

Million Dollar View (Route 1, Major Collector)

Moosehead Lake (formerly Seboomook, Route 6/15 –Minor Arterial/Major Collector)

Pequawket Trail (Route 5/113, Major Collector)

Saint John Valley(Route 1, 161, Minor Arterial/Major Collector)

State Route 27( Route 27, Major Collector)

The Bold Coast( Routes 1, 187, 191, 189, 190 – Minor Arterial/Major Collectors)

Old Canada Road (Route 201, Principal Arterial)

Rangeley Lakes( Routes 4/7, Minor Arterial/Major Collector)

Schoodic ( Routes 1, 186, Major Collector/Local Road)

Acadia All-American Road. (Route 3, Minor Arterial/Major Collector)

**Sightseeing** including Lighthouses, natural phenomenon, memorials or chartered whale watching.Natural Phenomonon includes features created by nature such as desert, waterfalls, mountains, and wilderness areas.Memorials includes Veterans, Fire Fighter and Police officer memorials funded and maintained by state or federal resources.Whale watching is the recreational practice of observing whales and other cetaceans in their natural habitat from floating crafts for a fee, including sailboats, out-of-use fish or whaling boats and custom-built water crafts.

**Skiing/Snowboarding/Snowshoeing-** facilities and area that offer downhill skiing, snowboarding as well as cross country skiing and snowshoeing.[[3]](#footnote-3)

**Snowmobiling -**including areas with significant mileage of maintained and marked trails

**State and National Parks or Forests and/or Preserved Public Land -** where Day Hiking, Backpacking, Mountain Biking or Rock Climbing may occur. Must be open to the public in minimum 3 consecutivemonths of the year, and have adequate parking and sanitary facilities. A federal park means a property designated as a National Park and is included in the National Park System. A State Park means any area of land or an interest in land, with or without improvements, that is acquired by or under the control of the state, managed primarily for public recreation or conservation purposes.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Water/Amusement Parks –** Must be open to the public 3 consecutive months of the year, have adequate parking and sanitary facilities for its customers**.**

**Whitewater rafting—**River locations with public access to over 10 miles of whitewater used for recreational use by human-powered inflatable rafts.

**Zoos/Animal Parks/Aquariums/Sanctuary/Wildlife Refuge -** Must be open to the public 3 consecutive months of the year, have adequate parking and sanitary facilities**.**

**Reconsideration**

Any interested person may request reconsideration by the Department within 14 days after notice of the Department’s findings regarding a sign request. This request must set forth in detail, the findings and conclusions of the Department to which the person objects, the basis of those objections and the nature of the relief requested. Upon receipt of the request, the department may schedule and hold a hearing limited to the matters set forth on the request. The department shall issue and write an opinion responding to the request whether or not a hearing is held. The response shall set out the Department’s reasons for either maintaining or modifying its findings.

The running of the time for appeal pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act is terminated by a timely request for reconsideration filed under this section. The full time for appeal commences and is computed from the date of the final Department action addressing the request for reconsideration. The filing of a request for reconsideration, however, is not an administrative or judicial prerequisite for the filing of an appeal.

**Appeals**

A final decision, whether subject to reconsideration or not, may be appealed as a final agency action.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY:

23 MRS §1912-c; 23 MRS §52; 23 MRS §4206

EFFECTIVE DATE:

March 21, 2016 – filing 2016-045

1. Beaches and Lake access may qualify for their own supplemental guides signs as well. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Beaches and Lake access may qualify for their own supplemental guides signs as well. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Major Ski areas may also qualify for their own supplemental guide sign. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. State and National Parks may also qualify for their own Supplemental Guide signs. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)