Sign placement guidance

Realty, campaign and other temporary signs must be placed on private property. Since highway right-of-way limits can vary greatly in width, look for fences parallel to the road or for utility pedestals and poles. These items are usually placed near the right-of-way limits.

Keep highway right-of-way clear of signs.

Utilities are often installed just inside the right-of-way limit. Signs are not allowed in the area between the utility poles and the road surface.

Political signs are allowed on private property with the permission of the landowner as long as the sign does not exceed 32 square feet and has no flashing lights or moving parts.

Citations and fines:

Citations may be issued for violating Wis. Statute 86.19, which covers improperly placed signs on state highway right-of-way. Fines may also be issued based on the seriousness of the offense. Fines range from $10 to $500 and are usually higher for second or subsequent violations.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Bureau of Highway Maintenance
4802 Sheboygan Avenue, Rm 501
Madison, WI 53707
Phone: 608.266.8460

http://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/real-estate/outdoor-adv/political.aspx

8/2013

Improperly placed signs on highway right-of-way

General guidelines

regarding garage sale, political, real estate and other temporary signs

IMPROPERLY PLACED SIGNS

Definition

Garage sale signs, political signs and signs selling real estate are occasionally placed improperly and illegally within highway right-of-way.

In addition to being illegal, improperly placed signs can distract motorists or impair their vision at intersections, driveways and even on the shoulder of the road. Signs can also be a safety hazard if accidentally struck by a vehicle or highway maintenance equipment, such as a mower.

For the safety of everyone, it is the duty of state and county workers to remove improperly placed signs. These workers are trained to handle such work activities safely.

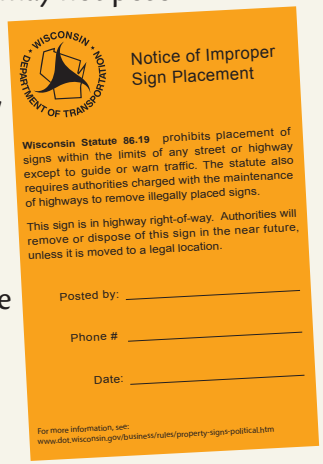
Signs placed improperly within the right-of-way can be a hazard.

Priority of removal

State or county workers do not make special trips to look for improperly placed signs, unless there is a complaint. These workers often discover such signs as they perform routine highway surveillance and maintenance activities.

The first priority is to remove signs that cause a safety hazard – such as signs in vision triangles at intersections. First priority signs are removed immediately.

Second priority signs may not pose an immediate threat to motorists. These second priority signs may be marked with a DOT blaze orange sticker titled, "Notice of Improper Sign Placement." If the sign is still present at a follow-up visit, the sign will be removed.


WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Notice of Improper Sign Placement

Wisconsin Statute 86.19 prohibits placement of signs within the limits of any street or highway except to guide or warn traffic. The statute also requires authorities charged with the maintenance of highways to remove illegally placed signs.

This sign is in highway right-of-way. Authorities will remove or dispose of this sign in the near future, unless it is moved to a legal location.

Posted by: _____

Phone # _____

Date: _____

For more information, see:
www.dot.wisconsin.gov/business/rules/property-signs-political.htm

Claiming removed signs

If a sign is removed by a public employee, you may call your county highway department to get it back – if the sign was removed less than 30 days ago. To retrieve the sign, you will have to pick it up at the county highway office or shop.

Improperly placed signs can add to the clutter along the roadside and be confusing to motorists.

Signs can block motorists' vision, causing unsafe conditions.