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**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

CHAPTER 63

Statutory Authority: 1976 Code Section 57-25-170

63-338. Specific Information Service Signing

**Synopsis:**

The Department of Transportation seeks to amend Regulation 63-338 by revising certain terms to be consistent with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The modification will avoid miscommunications in describing and implementing the program. Additionally, Regulation 63-338 will be amended to provide clarification to the criteria for the display of specific service signs and logo sign panels at interchanges under the program.

Notice of Drafting was published in the *State Register* on September 28, 2012.

**Instructions:**

Replace Regulation 63-338. (Specific Information Service Signing) as printed below.

**Text:**

63-338. Specific Information Service Signing.

A. Introduction. The South Carolina Department of Transportation has developed this program for the installation of specific service signs and logo sign panels on fully controlled access highways.

B. Purpose. The purpose of this program is:

(1) To provide motorists with business identification and directional information for essential motorist services and for eligible attractions;

(2) To eliminate illegal outdoor advertising signs as required by the South Carolina Highway Advertising Control Act. 57‑25‑110, et seq.

C. Definitions

(1) Department is the South Carolina Department of Transportation or its authorized agents.

(2) A Specific Service Sign is an official sign, rectangular in shape, located within the highway right‑of‑way and carrying legend for up to three (3) of the following services: gas, food, lodging, camping, or attraction along with directional information and space for one (1) to six (6) individual logo sign panels.

(3) A Logo Sign Panel is a separately attached sign, rectangular in shape, mounted on the specific service sign to show the brand or trademark and name, or both, of a qualified motorist service available at or near the next interchange.

(4) A Ramp Sign is an official sign, rectangular in shape, located along an exit ramp and carrying legend for up to three (3) of the following services: gas, food, lodging, camping or attraction together with directional information and space for one (1) to six (6) individual logo sign panels of the same design as logo sign panels, but smaller.

(5) A Trailblazer Sign is an official sign, rectangular in shape, located on the right of way of a highway with directional arrows and space for one (1) to four (4) individual logo sign panels of the same design as logo sign panels, but smaller.

(6) A Business is an individual business that provides gas, food, lodging, camping, or attraction services to motorists.

(7) Continuous Operation is the unremitting availability of motorist services within a prescribed number of hours.

(8) Rest Room Facilities are separate facilities for men and women, to include sink and toilet, and available to all motorists at no charge.

(9) Drinking Water is a water fountain and/or cups of water provide to all motorists at no charge.

(10) Public Telephone is a coin operated telephone available to all motorists. Private or business phones may be allowed if the business is unable to obtain a coin operated telephone so long as its use is provided to motorists.

D. Specific Service Signs

(1) A specific service sign bearing one (1) to six (6) separately attached logo sign panels may be erected on fully controlled access highways between the previous interchange and the exit direction sign where space permits.

(2) The specific service sign nearest to the interchange should be erected no closer than 1600 feet to the beginning of exit ramp taper of the approaching interchange with at least 800 foot spacing between the information signs. The specific service sign should be located longitudinally so as to take advantage of natural terrain and have the least impact on the scenic environment.

(3) No more than two (2) specific service signs for gas, food, lodging, camping, or attractions shall be erected in each direction approaching an interchange. Where more than six (6) businesses of a specific service type are eligible for logo signing at the same interchange, additional logo sign panels of the same service may be displayed on the available signs in accordance with the following provisions:

(a) No more than twelve (12) logo sign panels of a specific service type shall be displayed on no more than two (2) specific service signs.

(b) No more than six (6) logo sign panels shall be displayed on a single specific service sign.

(c) The number of specific service signs along an approach to an interchange, shall be limited to a maximum of four (4).

(4) A combination sign is a specific service sign that may display a maximum of three (3) specific services. The total number of logo sign panels on a combination sign shall be limited to six (6). If three (3) types of services are displayed on one (1) sign, then the logo sign panels shall be limited to two (2) for each service type (for a total of six (6) logo sign panels). If only two (2) types of services are displayed on one (1) sign, then the logo sign panel shall be limited to either three (3) for each service type (horizontal divider) or four (4) for one (1) service type and two (2) for the other service type (vertical divider). Combination specific service signs may be used to maximize the number of businesses displayed.

(5) The size of specific service signs should be adequate to accommodate the number of logo sign panels to be erected, using the required legend height and spacing in accordance with the latest Department specifications.

(6) For double exit interchanges the specific service sign shall consist of two sections, one for each exit. The top or left section shall display the logo sign panels for the first exit and the lower or right section shall display the logo sign panels for the second exit. Where participation for one exit is less than three (3) businesses for a service, the specific service sign may be arranged to allow for four (4) to six (6) logo sign panels to be displayed for the other exit. No more than twelve (12) logo sign panels shall be displayed for any service at an interchange.

(7) The background color of a specific service sign shall be blue with white reflectorized border. The words gas, food, lodging, camping or attraction and directional information shall be white reflectorized legend mounted on the blue sign.

(8) Specific service signs shall not be erected at any interchange with another controlled access facility; nor shall they be erected at any interchange where there is no entrance ramp at the interchange or at another reasonably convenient interchange by which the motorist may proceed in the desired direction of travel without undue indirection or use of poor connecting roads.

(9) In the direction of travel, the specific service signs shall be for attractions, camping, lodging, food, and gas services, in that order.

(10) Attraction signing shall not be used for stand-alone or strip-mall facilities that have the primary purpose of retail sales. Malls, shopping complexes or stores located in close proximity to one another having a unified theme may be eligible for participation if the criteria listed in Section I (e) are met.

E. Logo Sign Panels‑ Main Roadway

(1) Logo sign panels, separately attached on a specific service sign shall show the brand or trademark and name, or both, of the gas, food, lodging, camping or attraction facility located at or conveniently accessible from an interchange. Nationally, regionally or locally known commercial symbols or trademarks shall be used when applicable. The brand or trademark identification symbol used shall be reproduced with the colors and general shape consistent with customary use. Any messages, trademarks or brand symbols which interfere with, imitate or resemble an official traffic control device will not be permitted.

(2) Each logo sign panel on a specific service sign shall be contained in a rectangular background area. Any logo sign panel that does not display a nationally, regionally or locally known symbol or trademark shall display the business name in legend that contrasts effectively with the background.

(3) If a food business is only open six (6) days a week, it will be required to incorporate into the design of its logo sign panels a message indicating the day the business is closed. This message shall be legend that says “CLOSED” followed by the day of week the business is closed. The color of the legend shall contrast effectively with the background of the sign logo sign panel.

(4) Only one logo sign panel may be shown in each direction of travel for each service provided by a business, even though the business may be accessible from more than one interchange. Signing will be provided at the interchange closest to the business, as determined by the Department.

(5) Where the number of fully qualifying gas, food, lodging, camping or attraction businesses exceeds the available spaces on the specific service panels, the Department will solicit bids from all of the qualified businesses. Bid solicitation and selection will be governed by the Department’s policies and procedures.

F. Ramp Signs

(1) When the Department determines that any participating business is not visible from the terminal or decision point of a ramp which permits traffic to proceed in more than one direction on the crossroad, a ramp sign shall be placed on the exit ramp or at its terminus.

(2) Ramp signs shall not be erected for businesses not displaying logo sign panels on a specific service sign.

(3) A ramp combination sign is a ramp sign that may display a maximum of three (3) specific services. The total number of ramp logo sign panels on a ramp combination sign shall be limited to six (6).

(4) Ramp signs will be of an appropriate size to display the required number of ramp logo sign panels.

(5) The background color of a ramp sign shall be blue with white reflectorized border. The words gas, food, lodging, camping or attraction and directional information shall be in white reflectorized legend mounted on the blue sign.

G. Trailblazer Signs

(1) When the Department determines that the route to a business requires a direction change, it is questionable as to which roadway to follow, or when additional guidance is needed, a trailblazer panel may be placed along a crossroad up to 500 feet prior to any required turn.

(2) Trailblazer signs will be of an appropriate size to display the required number of trailblazer logo sign panels.

(3) The background color of a trailblazer signs shall be blue with white reflectorized border. White reflectorized directional arrows shall be mounted on the blue sign as needed for proper guidance.

(4) Trailblazer signs shall not be erected for businesses not displaying logo sign panels on a special service sign and a ramp sign.

(5) A trailblazer sign may contain various types of services on a single panel.

(6) When space along the right‑of‑way limits the number of signs or panels that can be erected, all other Department signing shall take priority over trailblazer signs.

H. Logo Sign Panels – Ramp and Trailblazer

(1) Ramp and trailblazer logo sign panels shall be of the same design as logo sign panels, but smaller.

(2) Each logo sign panel mounted on a ramp sign and trailblazer sign shall be contained in a rectangular background area. Any logo sign panel which does not display a nationally, regionally or locally known symbol or trademark shall display the business name legend which contrasts effectively with the background.

(3) If a food business is only open six (6) days a week, it will be required to incorporate into the design of its logo sign panel a message indicating what day the business is closed. This message shall say “CLOSED” followed by the day of week the business is closed. The color of the legend shall contrast effectively with the background of the logo sign panel.

I. Criteria

(1) A business located at or conveniently accessible from an interchange on a fully controlled access highway shall be eligible to have its logo sign panel placed on a specific service sign, a ramp sign, and on a trailblazer sign (but in accordance with Section F(1) and G(1)) if it meets the following conditions:

(a) Gas:

1. Located within three (3) miles of the interchange;

2. Vehicle services shall include fuel, oil and water;

3. Continuous operation at least sixteen (16) hours per day, seven (7) days a week;

4. Rest room facilities;

5. Drinking water;

6. Public telephone;

(b) Food:

1. Located within three (3) miles of the interchange;

2. Maintain a “Grade A” rating as defined by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control;

3. Continuous operation at least twelve (12) hours a day, six (6) days a week;

4. Rest room facilities;

5. Public telephone;

6. Indoor seating capacity for at least twenty (20) persons and/or drive‑thru service;

(c) Lodging:

1. Located within three (3) miles of the interchange;

2. Continuous operation, twelve (12) months per year;

3. At least ten (10) lodging rooms;

4. Public telephone;

(d) Camping:

1. Located within six (6) miles of the interchange;

2. Permit to operate by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control;

3. Modern sanitary facilities including restrooms and showers;

4. Drinking water;

5. Overnight accommodations for all types of travel trailers, tents and camping vehicles;

6. Adequate parking accommodations for at least ten (10) camping vehicles;

7. Continuous operation, seven (7) days a week;

8. If operated on a seasonal basis, signs will be removed;

9. Public telephone.

(e) Attraction:

1. Located within fifteen (15) miles of the interchange;

2. Be an activity or location that is one of the following:

(i) Amusement Park: a permanent area, open to the general public, whose principle activities include boating, entertainment rides, swimming, etc.;

(ii) Arena: an auditorium, civic or convention center, racetrack, sports complex, or stadium having a minimum seating capacity of 5,000;

(iii) College or University Facilities: an institution that is approved by a nationally recognized accreditation agency, has an enrollment of at least 500 fulltime students, and grants degrees;

(iv) Commerce Park: a group of commercial manufacturing or research facilities;

(v) Cultural Center: a facility for cultural events;

(vi) Facility Tour Location: a facility such as a factory, institution, or plant which conducts daily or weekly public tours on regular scheduled basis year‑round;

(vii) Fairground: a tract of land where fairs or exhibitions are held and which has permanent buildings including, but not limited to, bandstands, exhibition halls, livestock exhibition pens, etc.;

(viii) Historical Site or District: a structure or area listed on the national or state historical register and recognized by the Department as a historic attraction or location. Historic districts shall provide the public with a single, central location, such as a self‑service kiosk or welcome center, where motorists can obtain information regarding the district;

(ix) Recreational Area: a recreational attraction recognized by the Department including, but not limited to, bicycling, boating, fishing, hiking, picnicking, or rafting;

(x) Natural Phenomenon: a naturally occurring area which is of outstanding interest to the general public, such as a waterfall or a cavern;

(xi) Visitor Information Center: visitor information centers other than those operated by the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism must meet the criteria outlined by the Department;

(xii) Zoological/Botanical Park: a facility in which living animals or plants are kept and exhibited to the public;

(xiii) Malls/Shopping Areas: a shopping mall must have a minimum enclosed, climate-controlled shopping area of 400,000 square feet. A shopping area must consist of a group of ten (10) or more enclosed, climate-controlled retail establishments located in close proximity to one another and having a unified theme carried out by individual shops in their architectural design or their merchandise.

3. Maintain regular hours for that type of establishment;

4. Public restrooms;

5. Adequate parking accommodations.

(2) Where space is available on an existing gas, food or lodging specific service sign, distances for participation may be extended to a total of six (6) miles from the interchange. Extension of distances will be at the sole discretion of the Department and will be measured as described in Section I (3). In all instances, businesses meeting all of the provisions of Section I will be given first priority.

(3) In determining distances from the interchange, roadway mileages are to be used, measured from the off‑ramp terminal (where the off‑ramp intersects the crossing road or frontage road) nearest to the business under consideration. The measurement shall begin where the left edge of the off‑ramp pavement intersects the near edge of the crossing road pavement. If the off‑ramp terminal is channelized, the measurement shall begin at the intersection portion of the terminal nearest to the business under consideration.

(a) For gas, food, lodging, and attractions the measurement will terminate at the main entrance of the building where payment is received for services rendered.

(b) For camping facilities, the distance will be measured to the registration office on the property of the camping facility.

J. Installation and Maintenance

(1) The cost to the business for participation in the specific service signing program shall be determined by the Department based on each logo sign panel installed based upon interchange classification. Additional participation fees may be charged for installation, covering maintenance or replacement of logo sign panels. Fees may be charged for each occurrence.

(2) All logo sign panels will be furnished to the Department by the business at no cost to the Department and shall be manufactured to the standard specifications and approved design of the Department. Logo sign panels not meeting the specifications shall not be used.

(3) The Department shall be responsible for all required installation, routine maintenance, removal and placement of logo sign panels upon the specific service and ramp signs.

(4) The Department shall not be responsible for any damage, deterioration or loss of any logo sign panel. The business shall be responsible for furnishing replacement logo sign panels to the Department.

K. General Provisions

(1) Upon application to participate in the specific service signing program, a business shall give written assurance of its conformity with all applicable laws concerning the provision of public accommodations without regard to race, religion, color or national origin.

(2) If a business, at any time, fails to comply with applicable laws or these rules and regulations, the Department will take the necessary actions to remove the logo sign panels and disqualify that business from further participation in the program, except when a business closing is due to damages sustained by fire, accident or similar causes and when the Department is notified in writing within ten (10) days of such closing. In such cases the logo sign panel shall be removed or covered until the business is re‑opened.

(3) Any business that maintains any form of illegal outdoor advertising as determined by the South Carolina Highway Advertising Control Act shall be ineligible to participate in this program until such illegal advertising devices are removed.

(4) The Department reserves the right to cover or remove any or all logo sign panels during maintenance or construction operations or for research studies, or whenever deemed by the Department to be in the best interest of the Department or the traveling public without advance notice. The Department reserves the right to terminate the program or any portion thereof by furnishing the business written notice of such intent not less than thirty (30) calendar days prior to such action.

(5) The Department will prescribe the format and content of standard application and agreement forms to be used in the administration of this program.

(6) After a business has received approval of its application for participation in the program, an agreement, in accordance with these regulations, will be entered into between the Department and the business. Designs for the logo sign panels should be submitted, if required, for approval as soon as possible upon application.

**Fiscal Impact Statement:**

There will be no increased costs incurred by the State or any of its political subdivisions..

**Statement of Rationale:**

The purpose of amending Regulation 63-338 is to revise certain terms to be consistent with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The modification will avoid miscommunications in describing and implementing the program. Additionally, Regulation 63-338 will be amended to provide clarification to the criteria for the display of specific service signs and logo sign panels at interchanges under the program.