



# Iowa Department of Transportation

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October 28, 2013

## **NOTIFICATION to Iowa Cities and Counties**

**SUBJECT: Permit Process for Advertising Signs**

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the Department's responsibility to control the erection and maintenance of advertising signs along interstate and primary highways.

We have found that some local authorities have been unaware of state regulations that must be met in addition to local ordinances with respect to advertising signs on private property, (no signs, other than those authorized by the Manual on Traffic Control Devices are allowed in the right of way), along interstate and primary highways.

Signs advertising a product, which is not available, or an activity that does not take place at the sign's location are considered off-premise signs and outdoor advertising permits are required from the Department. A sign must meet established size, lighting, spacing, and zoning requirements before a permit can be issued.

We ask that in your dealings with sign owners that you alert them to the possibility that a state permit might be necessary. This will eliminate any unnecessary expense that could occur if they erect a sign that conforms to the local ordinance but must be removed later because it does not comply with state law.

We appreciate your cooperation in this matter. If you are not the person who oversees the signing ordinances for your jurisdiction, we would ask that you pass this letter on to the appropriate individual.

We do, as a matter of practice, require that the local zoning authority sign off on all outdoor advertising permit applications. This gives you the opportunity to share with the sign owner any regulations and requirements that you might have in addition to those contained in state law. This does not prohibit the local authority from establishing standards, which are more restrictive than state law. It is, however, the responsibility of the local jurisdiction to enforce their own ordinances.

If you have any questions regarding this matter feel free to contact our office at the telephone number listed above or visit our website at [www.iowadot.gov/iowaroadsigns](http://www.iowadot.gov/iowaroadsigns).

Sincerely,

Brent Christian  
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