

NCDOT Signage Programs

Making Your Business Visible

“Signs, Signs, Everywhere Are Signs”

Motorists see them everyday: stop signs, interstate signs, yield signs, and the like. For good reason: directional signs help motorists find their way quickly and safely. Driving without signs is risky business: a busy intersection without a stop sign can mean trouble.

In the same way, businesses that do not use directional signs are on a collision course with collapse. If customers do not know where to find businesses, they cannot shop them. To make it easier for both, the NC DOT has created a Signage Program.

This state-sponsored program was created to give motorists directions, but for participating businesses, these signs can serve a dual purpose. The directional signs can help them market their business, paving the way for the road ahead.

The purpose of this document is to describe the NC DOT’s three signage programs, and exactly how participating businesses might benefit from them.

NC DOT Signage Programs

In brief, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NC DOT) created its directional signage program to provide directions for motorists. But, since its beginning, the program has become much more. Ask any North Carolina motorist who has used a sign to find a gas station when they were about to run out of gas. Signs like this are part of the program, a program that has helped both travelers and businesses connect that otherwise may not have.

Consider some of the benefits of having a directional sign on the highway or on a rural road:

Key Benefits

- Make participating business’s display more credible and trusted as a marketing tool since the sign is state-sponsored.
- Enable participating businesses to advertise in a cost-effective way.
- Give participating businesses the opportunity to advertise to travelers or customers who live outside the area.
- Provide precise directions to participating businesses.

Below is a brief description of each program:

Logo Signs

Logo signs are official highway signs with the individual business’s name, symbol, or trademark attached to a pane on the sign. Businesses that qualify provide services for gas, food, lodging, camping, and attractions. (See pages 2-3)

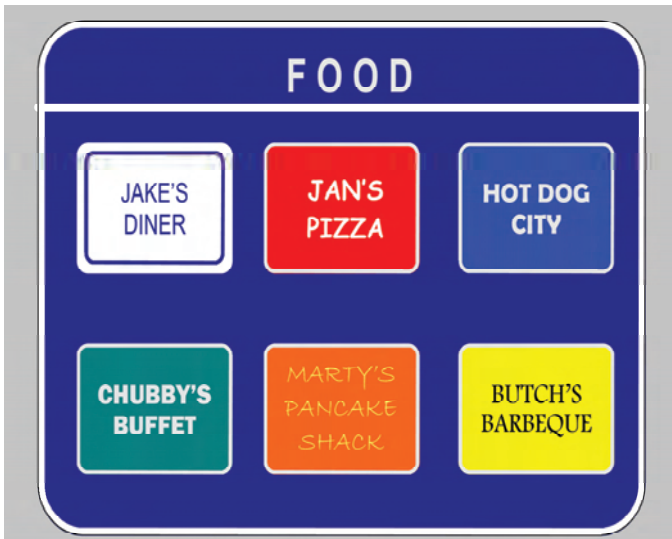
Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs (TODS)

TODS are different from Logo Signs. TODS Signs are intended for installation in rural areas at intersections and are not allowed on freeways, interchanges, or on ramps. Qualifying businesses for this program are campgrounds, boat rentals, bed and breakfasts, and other “tourist-oriented” businesses. (See pages 3-4)

Agricultural Tourism Signs

Agricultural Tourism signs can be used by any agricultural tourism business, but because of the high cost, are typically used by vineyards and wineries. These signs are found along both major highways and rural roads, and often appear at intersections to offer directions. (See pages 6-7)

Logo Signage Program



Sample

What is it?

This first-come, first-served program gives businesses, providing services for attractions, food, lodging, camping and gas, the opportunity to have their logos displayed on panels on official highway signs.

Why is it Important?

This program expands the reach of normal attempts at marketing. Most motorists who respond to logo signs have a pressing need for those products/services/goods advertised.

How Do I Sign-up?

Before installation, qualifying businesses must enter into an agreement with the NCDOT and pay the required fees. (See page 3)

Minimum Business Criteria**

Qualifying Businesses	On-site Attendant	Year-round Operation	Permanent Display of Operating Hours	Restrooms & Drinking Water	Public Telephone	Indoor Seating	Parking
Attractions	✓	8 hrs./day, 5 days/wk	x	x	✓	x	✓
Food	✓	8 hrs./day, 7 days/wk	x	✓	✓	20+	x
Lodging	✓	x	x	x	✓	x	✓
Camping ¹	✓	7 days/wk: in-season	x	x	x	x	✓
Gas	✓	16 hrs./day, 7 days/wk	✓	✓	✓	x	x

¹When qualifying business's Logo panel is removed or masked by NCDOT during the off season, the panel must still show the business's months closed/open.

**Businesses must be licensed as required by law and have a permit from the Health Department, where applicable.

Note: Businesses must be located on the crossroads: at or near an interchange

Additional Requirements

Owners of qualifying businesses need to give written notice that their business conforms with all laws regarding the provision of public accommodations without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, disability, or national origin.

Rental Fee

Participating businesses pay an annual rental fee of \$300 for each mainline, ramp, and trailblazer panel. Trailblazer panels are necessary when more than one turn is required to find the business. Typically, two business panels are installed along the mainline (one in each direction), and two business panels are installed along the ramps, totaling an annual rental fee of \$1,200.

(A maximum of six logo panels is allowed for each Logo sign.)

Application Process

Businesses must apply by making a written request to the Division Engineer who has jurisdiction over the specific interchange. Requests will be accepted by the following methods: fax, e-mail, or certified mail, return receipt requested, US Postal Service, UPS, Federal Express, or hand delivered. These requests should include the specific route, interchange (exit number), and service type. After an appropriate review, the Division Engineer will notify the potential participant as to whether the business qualifies for signing.

NC DOT Division Contact Information

To apply for the Logo program, contact your county's Division Coordinator

Division 1	(252) 482-7977 <i>Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hyde, Martin, Northhampton, Pasquotank, Perquimons, Tyrrell, Hertford, Washington</i>
Division 2	(252) 830-3490 <i>Beaufort, Cartaret, Craven, Green, Onslow, Pender, Sampson</i>
Division 3	(910) 341-0300 <i>Brunswick, Duplin, New Hanover, Onslow, Pender, Sampson</i>
Division 4	(252) 237-6164 <i>Edgecombe, Halifax, Johnston, Nash, Wayne, Wilson</i>
Division 5	(919) 560-6856 <i>Durham, Franklin, Granville, Person, Vance, Wake, Warren</i>
Division 6	(910) 486-1493 <i>Bladen, Columbus, Cumberland, Harnett, Robeson</i>
Division 7	(336) 334-3192 <i>Alamance, Caswell, Guilford, Orange, Rockingham</i>

Division 8	(910) 947-3930 <i>Chatham, Hoke, Lee, Montgomery, Moore, Randolph, Richmond, Scotland</i>
Division 9	(336) 703-6500 <i>Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Rowan, Stokes</i>
Division 10	(704) 982-0101 <i>Anson, Cabarrus, Mecklenburg, Stanly, Union</i>
Division 11	(336) 667-9111 <i>Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Caldwell, Surry, Watauga, Wilkes, Yadkin</i>
Division 12	(704) 480-9020 <i>Alexander, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln</i>
Division 13	(828) 251-6171 <i>Buncombe, Burke, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Rutherford, Yancey</i>
Division 14	(828) 631-1185 <i>Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Polk, Swan, Transylvania</i>

Disclaimer: This brochure is not meant to fully describe all of the regulations and requirements for the Logo Signage Program.

For more information, visit www.ncdot.org/~Logo

Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs (TODS) Program



Sample

What is it?

Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs (TODS) are meant to help tourists find tourist-oriented activities and locations. TODS are designed for installation in rural areas at intersections. TODS panels include an individual business's name, distance, and directional arrow. (See left)

Why is it Important?

Like the other signage programs, TODS give qualifying businesses an edge: every business owner knows that visibility is key in reaching customers. TODS provide that visibility.

How Do I Sign-up?

Contact your County's Division Coordinator for more information. (See page 5)

Minimum Business Criteria

To qualify for this program, businesses or facilities must be a tourist attraction. For businesses that provide Lodging or Camping to qualify, each must have two or more amenities on its premises. (See below)

Who is Eligible:

Amusement parks, cultural centers, facility tour locations, historic sites or districts, recreation areas, natural phenomena, zoological/botanical parks and farms, agricultural facilities.

Not Eligible:

Shopping malls, furniture stores, drug stores, movie theatres, community business districts, appliance stores, automobile/truck dealerships or garages, houses of worship, real estate offices, livestock sales facilities, grocery stores, gas or vehicle service stations, bars, lounges, adult establishments, adult video, book, or novelty stores, medical facilities, and restaurants.

Requirements:

(For Camping and Lodging Facilities)

Facilities	Amenities (must have 2 or more)**							
	Hiking/Biking Trails	Horseback Riding	Fishing	Golfing	Rafting	Skating	Scenic Views	Indoor Spa w/ Attendant
Lodging ¹	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Camping ²	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

¹Lodging facilities must be listed on the National or State Historic register; or be renowned for exceptional architecture, botanical gardens, or haute cuisine.

²Camping facilities must have at least 10 campsites with accommodations for all types of travel trailers, travel vehicles, and tents with adequate parking.

**Other proposed amenities must be reviewed and approved by the State Traffic Engineer.

More Facility Requirements by the Numbers:

Must operate **8** hours/day, **5** days/week
Must be located in a rural, unincorporated area/town
with a population of **<40,000**

30% of facility's products/services must be tourism-related,
and revenue from those tourism-related products/services
must be **≥40%** of total revenue

51% of income/visitors must come from road-users outside
20-mile radius

\$200 annual rental fee (excludes fabrication costs)

NC DOT Division Contact Information

To apply for the TODS program, contact your county's Division Coordinator

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Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hyde, Martin, Northhampton, Pasquotank, Perquimons, Tyrrell, Hertford, Washington

Division 2 (252) 830-3490

Beaufort, Cartaret, Craven, Green, Onslow, Pender, Sampson

Division 3 (910) 341-0300

Brunswick, Duplin, New Hanover, Onslow, Pender, Sampson

Division 4 (252) 237-6164

Edgecombe, Halifax, Johnston, Nash, Wayne, Wilson

Division 5 (919) 560-6856

Durham, Franklin, Granville, Person, Vance, Wake, Warren

Division 6 (910) 486-1493

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Division 7 (336) 334-3192

Alamance, Caswell, Guilford, Orange, Rockingham

Division 8 (910) 947-3930

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Division 9 (336) 703-6500

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Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Polk, Swan, Transylvania

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For more information, visit www.ncdot.org/~TODS

Agricultural Tourism Signage



Sample

What is it?

The NCDOT and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDACS) partnered to form this signage program. This program is meant to promote tourism in North Carolina as well as help market agricultural businesses.

Why is it Important?

This signage program is good news for agricultural businesses. This program can bring paying customers to qualifying businesses, which can help compensate for slow crop sales when going to market.

How Do I Sign-up?

Unlike the Logo and TODS programs, applications for Agricultural Tourism signs are made to the NC DACS. (See page 7)

Minimum Business Criteria

- Open at least 10 full months per year, 4 days per week (minimum of 32 hours).
- Must have on-site public accommodations for the following:
 - » Restrooms,
 - » Drinking water,
 - » Telephones,
 - » An all-weather structure, and
 - » Adequate parking.

Additionally, businesses must:

- Offer tours to the public and offer samples and/or sales of its products.
- Provide signs on premises, listing hours of operation and tour times.
- Provide tours of facility that:
 - » Have a knowledgeable guide;
 - » Are educational, informative, and entertaining;
 - » Are long enough to describe facility and its operations; and
 - » Are conducted regularly; or are within 30 minutes of customers' requests.

Minimum Signage Criteria**

- Signs must be located within 15 miles of the facility.
- Signs are not allowed on freeway-to-freeway interchanges.
- Facilities adding their names to existing signs pay all the costs incurred for the update.
- For joint signage requests, participating facilities share equally in all costs.

Note: Signs are granted on a first-come, first-served, basis. (Wait lists are limited to the first four names on the list.)

Cost

Businesses pay for all the costs of the program. This includes designing, making, installing, maintaining, and replacing the signs. (The program can cost several thousand dollars.)

Installation

- Businesses do not design their own logo.
- The Department of Agriculture provides the logo.
- Nine months to a year can elapse from application to installation.
- Businesses may contract the installation of the signs through a private contractor.
- For signs installed on exit ramps, the panel will show the mileage to the facility and directions to the facility.

Application

Unlike the Logo and TODS programs, application for Agricultural Tourism signs is made to the NC DACS. As the primary contact, the NC DCAS sets the policies for the program; decides if the applications meet the program's eligibility requirements; visits the facility to ensure that those requirements are met; forwards approved applications to the NCDOT Traffic Engineering Branch – Signing Section.

To apply for this program,

Contact:

Martha Glass, Agritourism Office
martha.glass@ncmail.net
Agritourism Office (919) 733-7887
(<http://www.ncagr.com/markets/agritourism/index.htm>)

Note:

Owners need to certify in writing that his/her business complies with all Federal, State and local laws, and applicable licenses and permits.

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For more, visit www.ncdot.org/doh/PRECONSTRUCT/traffic/tepl/Topics/A-07/A-7.html