

## Sign placement guidance

Realty, campaign and other temporary signs must be placed on private property. Since highway right-of-way limits may 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 Wisconsin Statute s. 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.*

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Bureau of Highway Maintenance  
4822 Madison Yards Way,  
5th Floor South  
Madison, WI 53705  
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<https://wisconsin.gov/Pages/doing-business/real-estate/outdoor-adv/improp-placed-signs.aspx>



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## 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 may distract motorists or impair their vision at intersections, driveways and even on the shoulder of the road. Signs may 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 may 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, "Removal Order, Right of Way Encroachment." If the sign is still present at a follow-up visit, the sign will be removed.

**REMOVAL ORDER**  
**RIGHT OF WAY ENCROACHMENT**  
Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
DT1813 3/2017

Wisconsin statutes 86.021, 86.022, 86.04 and 86.19 prohibit encroachments within the highway right of way. Such items may pose a hazard to the traveling public or cause damage to state-owned property. The encroachment below was discovered within WisDOT right of way. Failure to remove the item by the date shown will result in removal by state maintenance authorities, and the owner billed for removal costs and/or damages.

Encroachment: \_\_\_\_\_  
Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
Remove by: \_\_\_\_\_  
WisDOT rep: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

For more information, go to:  
<http://wisconsindot.gov/encroachments>

## 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 need to pick it up at the county highway office or shop.



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



Signs may block motorists' vision, causing unsafe conditions.