



Florida Department of Transportation

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POLICY

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Traffic Engineering & Operations
Topic No.: 000-750-015-d

DISPLAYING MESSAGES ON DYNAMIC MESSAGE SIGNS PERMANENTLY MOUNTED ON THE STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

PURPOSE:

The main purpose of dynamic message signs (DMS) is to convey timely and important en-route and roadside information to motorists and travelers. The Florida Department of Transportation's guiding principles on posting DMS messages shall conform to the Federal Highway Administration's *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)*.

DEFINITION:

Dynamic Message Sign — Refers to dynamic, changeable or variable message signs, defined as programmable traffic control devices that display messages composed of letters, symbols/graphics or both. They are used to provide information about changing highway conditions in order to improve operations, reduce accidents, and inform travelers. These signs may inform drivers to change travel speed, change lanes, divert to a different route, or simply to be aware of a change in current or future traffic conditions.

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to designate the use of DMS on the State Highway System for managing travel, controlling and diverting traffic, identifying current and anticipated roadway and environmental conditions, or regulating access to specific lanes or the entire roadway.

The default display on dynamic message signs shall be travel time display. Travel time messages can be preempted with other messages as needed in the following order:

- 1) Conditions which require motorists to take action or alter their driving, such as emergency events including evacuations or closures required by FDOT, the State Emergency Operations Center, state and local law enforcement, the military, or the Department of Homeland Security.
- 2) Traffic incidents, hazardous and/or uncommon road conditions, work zone activities, and severe weather conditions.
- 3) Florida Department of Law Enforcement Alerts such as America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) Alerts, Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) Alerts and Silver Alerts.
- 4) Traveler information related to special events, emergencies, and incidents impacting mobility and safety.

In the absence of accurate travel time information, at locations where travel time information would not be useful, or when not being preempted with other messages listed above, the default display shall be a blank sign.

The use of DMS for the display of general public information, advertisements, and non-essential messages is prohibited. However, public information messages that assist the Department in improving highway safety and reducing congestion may be used. These messages shall only be displayed when any of the following conditions are met:

- a. Display of the message will have a positive effect on highway safety and congestion in the area.
- b. The message is a supplement to a specific national or statewide highway safety media campaign on the same topic.

The total duration of any such highway safety campaign message shall not exceed two hours per day, shall not be displayed during peak hour travel periods, shall not last more than two weeks in duration, and shall not exceed six events per year.

The message display must be approved by the State Traffic Engineer prior to displaying the message. A library of acceptable standard messages is included in the ***Traffic Engineering Manual (TEM), Topic No. 750-000-005.***



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