

**RULES
OF
TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**CHAPTER 1680-3-5
LOCAL GOVERNMENT GUIDE SIGN PROGRAM (WAYFINDING PROGRAM)
INCLUDING CONVENTIONAL STATE HIGHWAYS**

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1680-3-5-.01 PURPOSE.

The purpose of these Rules is to establish methods, procedures, and guidelines under which a local government may adopt a guide sign program (Wayfinding Program) to provide for local control of guide signs maintained on conventional state highways within a defined Wayfinding Region. An approved Wayfinding Program shall operate in place of the Department's regulations for guide signs on conventional state highways as established in Chapter 1680-3-2.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 4-3-2307 and 54-5-108. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed August 2, 2005; effective October 16, 2005.

1680-3-5-.02 APPLICATION AND SCOPE OF PROGRAM.

- (1) Any county or incorporated municipality within the State of Tennessee that is organized with legal authority to construct and maintain its own local roads is authorized to adopt a Wayfinding Program as provided in these Rules.
- (2) Adoption of a Wayfinding Program is optional, and nothing in these Rules shall be construed to require any county or municipality to participate in or undertake a Wayfinding Program.
- (3) An approved Wayfinding Program may apply to conventional state highways within the jurisdiction of a county or municipality, but it shall not apply to freeways and expressways, including ramps, on the state highway system. Guide signs on all freeways and expressways on the state highway system, as well as guide signs on all conventional state highways outside of any designated Wayfinding Region, will continue to be maintained by the Department.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 4-3-2307 and 54-5-108. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed August 2, 2005; effective October 16, 2005.

1680-3-5-.03 DEFINITIONS.

- (1) "Conventional highway" means a highway with at-grade intersections and without control of access.
- (2) "Department" means the Tennessee Department of Transportation.
- (3) "Eligible local government" as used in these Rules means a county or a municipality that is incorporated under the laws of the State of Tennessee and is organized with legal authority to construct and maintain its own local roads.
- (4) "Expressway" means a divided highway with partial control of access, including some grade-separated interchanges as well as at-grade intersections.

(Rule 1680-3-5-.03, continued)

- (5) “Freeway” means a divided highway with full control of access, including grade-separated interchanges rather than at-grade intersections.
- (6) “Guide sign” means a highway or street sign that shows route designations (route shields), destinations, directions, distances, services, points of interest, or other geographical, recreational, or cultural information.
- (7) “Guide sign policy” as used in these Rules means a policy that establishes the types of destinations or points of interest for which guide signs may be erected, the specific eligibility criteria under which such destinations or points of interest may be signed, and the types of signs (standard or non-standard) that will be used under an approved Wayfinding Program.
- (8) “MUTCD” means the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways*, which is adopted and incorporated by reference in Chapter 1680-3-1 of the Rules of the Tennessee Department of Transportation.
- (9) “Non-standard sign” means a sign that does not conform to the MUTCD’s standards or guidance for sign design, including color, shape, size, lettering, legend, borders, and reflectivity.
- (10) “Standard sign” means a sign that does conform to the MUTCD’s standards or guidance for sign design, including color, shape, size, lettering, legend, borders, and reflectivity.
- (11) “State highway” means a highway designated by the Department as part of the state highway system of the State of Tennessee.
- (12) “Wayfinding Program” means a program adopted by an eligible local government in accordance with these Rules that provides for local control of guide signs within a defined Wayfinding Region, including conventional state highways as well as local roads under the local government’s jurisdiction, in place of the Department’s regulations for guide signs on conventional state highways as established in Chapter 1680-3-2.
- (13) “Wayfinding Region” means the defined area, including all or part of an eligible local government, within which a Wayfinding Program approved by the Department shall apply.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 4-3-2307 and 54-5-108. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed August 2, 2005; effective October 16, 2005.

1680-3-5-.04 ALTERNATIVE SIGNING METHODS.

Subject to the approval of the Department and the Federal Highway Administration, if applicable, as indicated in these Rules, an eligible local government may adopt a Wayfinding Program that provides for the use of either standard or non-standard signs within the Wayfinding Region, as follows:

- (1) A local government may use standard signs consistent with the current edition of the MUTCD.
 - (a) Under this method, all guide signs on conventional state highways previously installed and maintained by the Department that are located within the Wayfinding Region and included in the local government’s Wayfinding Program will be maintained and replaced as needed by the local government, except that
 - (b) On state highways within the Wayfinding Region the Department will continue to be responsible for the installation and maintenance of all route designation signs (route shields),

(Rule 1680-3-5-.04, continued)

city destination signs, and any other guide signs that the Department has designated to remain in place under the local government's approved Wayfinding Program.

- (2) In the alternative, an eligible local government may request to use non-standard signs that are not consistent with the MUTCD.
 - (a) Under this method, the local government must apply to the Federal Highway Administration for experimental status following the steps outlined in the current MUTCD and these Rules for the use of such non-standard signs.
 - (b) If the request to experiment is approved, all guide signs on conventional state highways within the Wayfinding Region that were previously installed and maintained by the Department shall be removed by the local government at the local government's expense and returned to Department's applicable Regional highway sign shop or otherwise disposed of as directed by the Department's Traffic Engineering Office, except that
 - (c) On conventional state highways within the Wayfinding Region the Department will continue to be responsible for the installation and maintenance of route designation (route shields) and directional signs, city destination and distance signs, and any other guide signs that the Department has designated to remain in place under the local government's approved Wayfinding Program. Signs maintained by the Department within the Wayfinding Region will be standard signs consistent with the MUTCD.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 4-3-2307 and 54-5-108. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed August 2, 2005; effective October 16, 2005.

1680-3-5-.05 PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND APPROVALS.

- (1) Guide Sign Policy.
 - (a) An eligible local government choosing to have a Wayfinding Program shall develop a proposed guide sign policy that establishes:
 1. The types of destinations and/or points of interest for which guide signs may be erected;
 2. The specific eligibility criteria under which such destinations and points of interest may be signed; and
 3. The types of signs (standard or non-standard) that will be used to sign destinations and points of interest under the proposed Wayfinding Program.
 - (b) The proposed guide sign policy must provide for the signing of any destination or point of interest that is required to be signed under applicable law, including state statutes.
 - (c) In addition, the proposed guide sign policy should provide for the signing of all destinations or points of interest previously signed by the Department under its guide sign policy for conventional state highways.
 - (d) The Department reserves the right to require that specifically designated guide signs previously installed and maintained by the Department shall remain in place under the approved Wayfinding Program. In such cases, the Department will retain responsibility for maintaining the designated signs.

(Rule 1680-3-5-.05, continued)

- (e) All signs within the Wayfinding Region must conform to the design standards of the current MUTCD, including standards for the shape, color, dimensions, legends, borders and reflectivity of signs, unless the local government has obtained approval for the use of non-standard signs from the Federal Highway Administration under the request to experiment process.
 - (f) In any event, all guide signs within the Wayfinding Region must use a consistent sign design, whether by using standard signs consistent with the MUTCD or by using a consistent design for non-standard signs as may be approved by the Federal Highway Administration under the request to experiment process.
 - (g) The local government shall submit its proposed guide sign policy to the Department's Traffic Engineering Office for review and approval.
- (2) Wayfinding Region.
 - (a) The local government shall define the geographic area within its jurisdictional limits that will constitute the Wayfinding Region in which its proposed guide sign policy shall apply.
 - (b) The Wayfinding Region may include all or part of the area within the jurisdiction of the local government, subject to the approval of the Department.
 - (c) The local government shall submit a detailed map defining the proposed Wayfinding Region to the Department's Traffic Engineering Office for review and approval.
- (3) Identification of Guide Signs.
 - (a) The local government shall prepare a complete inventory, and a map showing the location, of all guide signs on conventional state highways within the Wayfinding Region that have been previously installed and maintained by the Department.
 - (b) The local government shall prepare a complete list of all destinations and points of interest that it proposes to sign on conventional state highways within the Wayfinding Region and a map showing the approximate location of each proposed guide sign.
 - (c) The local government shall submit the above-described inventory, list and maps to the Department's Traffic Engineering Office for review and approval before installing any guide signs on conventional state highways under the local government's proposed guide sign policy.
- (4) Request to Experiment.
 - (a) If an eligible local government proposes to use non-standard guide signs, it must obtain approval from the Federal Highway Administration as provided in the MUTCD's request to experiment process.
 - (b) The request to experiment shall be submitted to the Department's Traffic Engineering Office for review and approval. Upon approval, the Department will forward the local government's request to experiment to the Federal Highway Administration.
 - (c) The local government shall have responsibility for all aspects of the experimental process (submittal, monitoring, evaluation, reporting, termination, etc.), except as provided in the preceding subparagraph (b).

(Rule 1680-3-5-.05, continued)

- (d) The local government shall not remove any existing guide signs or install any non-standard signs on conventional state highways prior to receiving approval from the Federal Highway Administration on its request to experiment.
- (5) Notice of Approval.

After all required documents have been reviewed and approved by the Department's Traffic Engineering Office as provided in this Rule, the Department will send the local government a letter agreement setting forth the terms and conditions of the approved Wayfinding Program. If accepted by the local government, the chief executive officer of the local government shall execute the letter agreement, in accordance with such procedures as may be required under local law, and return it to the Department's Traffic Engineering Office.
- (6) Approval of Modifications to the Wayfinding Program.
 - (a) A request to modify an approved Wayfinding Program shall be submitted in writing to the Department's Traffic Engineering Office for review and approval. If the modification is approved the Department's Traffic Engineering Office will prepare an amendment to the letter agreement, which shall be accepted in the same manner as the original agreement.
 - (b) If a requested modification changes any aspect of an approved request to experiment under the MUTCD, the request shall be submitted to the Department for review and approval, and if approved the Department will forward the request to the Federal Highway Administration for approval.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 4-3-2307 and 54-5-108. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed August 2, 2005; effective October 16, 2005.

1680-3-5-.06 INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE OF SIGNS.

- (1) The local government with jurisdiction over the Wayfinding Region shall have the responsibility to oversee and implement the approved Wayfinding Program, but the local government may use an outside organization or consultant to manage the daily operations of its Wayfinding Program.
- (2) The placement of all guide signs within the Wayfinding Region shall conform to the standards and guidance of the current MUTCD.
- (3) All guide signs and their structural supports, including without limitation posts, foundations and mountings, installed and maintained within the Wayfinding Region shall conform to the standards of and be crashworthy as defined in the MUTCD.
- (4) The local government shall be responsible, at its own expense, to install, maintain and/or replace as necessary all guide signs on conventional state highways within the Wayfinding Region that are included in or installed under the approved Wayfinding Program, except as follows:
 - (a) The Department will continue to maintain route designation (route shield) and directional signs as well as city destination and distance signs on conventional state highways throughout the Wayfinding Region, and
 - (b) The Department will maintain any other guide signs that it may designate to remain in place under the approved Wayfinding Program.
- (5) The local government will assume all liability for signs that are included, installed, and/or maintained within the Wayfinding Region under the approved Wayfinding Program.

(Rule 1680-3-5-.06, continued)

- (6) The Department's TODS program signs and trailblazer signs installed under the Department's LOGO sign program shall remain in place within the Wayfinding Region unless, subject to the approval of the Department and consent of any affected facility, new guide signs installed under the Wayfinding Program will sign the same facility. In such cases, the Department's LOGO and/or TODS signs shall be removed.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 4-3-2307 and 54-5-108. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed August 2, 2005; effective October 16, 2005.