

Business, education and leisure signs – a guide for applicants

Although it may seem a simple matter to have a sign put up to direct motorists to your establishment, please remember that there are road safety, quality and 'sign clutter' issues to address before applications can be approved. Your application will be judged against a range of eligibility criteria, as well as against road safety and traffic management factors.

The impact of new signs

The usefulness of the information on a sign must be balanced against its impact on the environment. New signs in conjunction with other traffic signs can have a cumulative detrimental impact on the environment. This is particularly the case in conservation and rural areas, where signing can have a detrimental impact on the character of the area. It is important that the environmental impact of new signs is minimised.

For road safety purposes, it is important that drivers are not overloaded with destination signage and that individual signs do not contain more than the minimum information required to reach the destination.

The purpose of a traffic sign

Like any form of traffic signing, tourist signs are only an aid to safe and efficient navigation — which compliment, but can't replace, sat-navs, maps or other pre-planning material. Road signs should not be used as a substitute for good promotional material, or as a way of circumventing planning regulations relating to advertising.

Applicants are expected to advertise their establishments, opening times, the location, accessibility by road and, where appropriate, public transport, through the tourist industry. In the case of tourist facilities and attractions, this might include tourist brochures and other literature available through Tourist Information Centres. Applicants should provide evidence of this.

What kind of signs can we approve?

All traffic signs must comply with The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) and the guidance for its use. Signs should also comply with the design guidance given in Chapter 7 of the Traffic Signs Manual.

Business names are not permitted on signs and 'generic' terms will be used, e.g. 'Local shops', 'Leisure centre', etc.

What criteria do we use to assess eligibility?

Full details of our eligibility criteria can be found in the accompanying document entitled 'Eligibility Criteria'. However, the following points should be considered at the outset:

1. On Council roads, destinations or facilities can only be signed from the nearest 'A' or 'B' class road or other road carrying more than 5,000 vehicles per day.
2. Road users are likely to assume that the erection of a sign on the road network indicates Local Traffic Authority approval for the destination that is shown on the signs. Membership of a recognised national or regional scheme for maintaining quality standards is therefore a relevant factor in consideration of an application.
3. Eligibility does not confer automatic entitlement for direction / tourist signs. Decisions on signing individual establishments will depend on local circumstances, including the number of other similar establishments in the area.

Can you answer yes to all these questions?

- Are you open at least 4 hours a day for 150 days a year?
- Are you outside a main town centre?
- Are you a permanent establishment?
- Are you open to the casual passing visitor?
- Do you have adequate parking facilities?
- Are you prepared to pay the full costs of any signing scheme?

If so, please consider the cost implications below and then check that your establishment meets the eligibility criteria before applying. Please note that the application fee is non-refundable and that your application may be turned down.

Costs

Anyone making an application for signs will be required to complete the application form, supply supporting information as requested and pay a non-returnable fee of £343.40 for the application to be considered. This fee is retained whether the application is successful or not, to cover administration costs.

In addition to the application fee, subsequent costs will cover the design, manufacture, and installation of the sign(s). Often it may not be appropriate to add further signs at a location due to the number of existing signs, in which case the applicant will be required to pay for a new sign arrangement which incorporates theirs and existing destinations on one larger sign. This may also require new posts and foundations to accommodate the sign, in which case applicants will also be required to pay for these elements.

A cost estimate for all the above will be provided to the applicant before going ahead. The estimate will also include a 25% administration fee, along with a further 20% charge towards future cleaning of the sign(s). If any excavations are required a further charge of £190.00 will also be payable under the New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991 (NRSWA). This fee covers a legal requirement under the Act to contact utility companies to determine the location of any underground / overhead services that may impact upon the request. If the radius of the search area exceeds 250m then more than one search may be required.

All signs remain the property of South Gloucestershire Council, and the Council retains the right to amend, remove or reposition them and charge for any subsequent replacement – in addition to the charges set out above. In the event of signs / posts being stolen or destroyed in a road traffic accident, the applicant will also pay the cost of repair or replacement - unless these costs can be successfully reclaimed through insurance.

Signs on motorways or trunk roads

If you would like a sign erected on a motorway or trunk road, you should contact National Highways:

Call: 0300 123 5000

Email: info@nationalhighways.co.uk

Post: National Highways
National Traffic Operations Centre
3 Ridgeway
Quinton Business Park
Birmingham B32 1AF