

## GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING ELECTIONEERING SIGNS ON STATE HIGHWAYS

This statement is a guideline for Waka Kotahi (NZTA) regional staff/delegated local authority staff and their consultants.

The guideline objectives are to minimise the potential for road crashes arising from drivers being distracted by indiscriminate installation of electioneering signs and to ensure consistency of application of Waka Kotahi policy on such signs with minimal involvement by Waka Kotahi.

Note that the provisions of the New Zealand Transport Agency (Signs on State Highways) Bylaw 2010 apply to electioneering signs and therefore approvals of them must be handled in accordance with that bylaw.

1. **On Rural State Highways and Reserves (Waka Kotahi (NZTA) to Manage)**  
*(Rural areas relate to State Highways with speed limits over 70 km/h)*
  - 1.1 Signs should be located off state highway reserves. In exceptional circumstances only, signs may be erected within the State highway reserve with the **written approval of the Senior Manager, System Management**.
  - 1.2 For the exceptional circumstance to apply, the applicant must be able to demonstrate that all other options have been exhausted and that there is no other appropriate safe location for the sign.
  - 1.3 **Signs must:**
    - **not** be reflectorised.
    - be located giving consideration to visibility and traffic safety.
    - **not** be on or adjacent to motorways.
    - **not** be located at least 100m from intersections, bends in the highway and from other regulatory signs
    - **not** be erected in a manner that will create distraction or danger to road users; and
    - **not** imitate any official traffic signs.
  - 1.4 For the above noted safety reasons, vehicle mounted signs situated on State Highways **are not permitted**.
  - 1.5 To minimise staff involvement, Waka Kotahi shall:
    - act quickly on inquiries from political parties and the public.
    - instruct network consultants to inspect all state highways for compliance every 7 to 10 days.
    - phone the parties/candidates where there is noncompliance, requesting action/removal within 48 hours; and
    - instruct consultants to remove the signs if there is no action after 48 hours.
  - 1.6 Where any sign is erected without NZTA approval in an obviously unsafe location it must be removed immediately and stored undamaged. The party must then be advised of the storage location for retrieval at a fee of \$50 to cover NZTA costs.
2. **On Property Adjoining Rural State Highways and On Urban State Highway Reserves and Adjoining Property (Local Authorities to Manage)**  
*(urban areas relate to State highways with speed limits of 70 km/h or less)*
  - 2.1 Waka Kotahi shall refer all applicants/parties to the appropriate local authority.
  - 2.2 Although it is expected that local authorities will administer their own controls in terms of district plans, Waka Kotahi should make known its views that any signs should meet the Waka Kotahi policy requirements set out in paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4 above.
  - 2.3 Beyond appropriate liaison with local authorities to convey the above policy, Waka Kotahi shall have no other involvement with signs in these areas.

5 July 2022

Dear Candidate

## Electioneering Signs Adjacent to State Highways

Waka Kotahi (NZTA) as road controlling authority for State highways throughout New Zealand seeks the co-operation of your party in controlling the location of electioneering signs adjacent to those highways.

The Waka Kotahi Board continues to be concerned with the potential for driver distraction arising from signs, particularly those adjacent to intersections and along higher speed arterial routes carrying high traffic volumes. It is clear from New Zealand and overseas experience that there is a direct correlation between poorly located signage and road crashes. Waka Kotahi is keen to ensure that electioneering signs do not contribute in any way to the road toll on New Zealand roads.

With this in mind there are some fundamental considerations we would ask you to make when erecting electioneering signs adjacent to state highways. These are:

In **rural** areas (where speed limits are 70km/h or above)

- Signs should be located off the highway reserve. You will, of course, need to consult with property owners and the appropriate local authority to gain any necessary consent.
- If the sign requires resource consent, approval will likely be required from Waka Kotahi as an affected party under Section 95 of the Resource Management Act, your local authority will be able to advise on this.
- Signs must not be reflectorised or erected in such a location that will create an obvious conflict with existing road signs.
- Signs must not imitate or be of a form similar to any traffic signs. (This is a legal requirement in terms of the Land Transport Act 2003.)
- The location of signs must give consideration to visibility and other traffic safety aspects.
- Signs must be located **at least 100m** from intersections, bends in the highway and from other regulatory signs
- Signs are not permitted on or adjacent to **motorways**.
- For the above noted safety reasons, vehicle mounted signs situated on State Highways **are not permitted**.

In **urban** areas (where speed limits are 70 km/h or less) you should seek the local authority's approval for erection of signs within or adjoining the road reserve.

Signs erected on rural State highways in a location or manner likely to cause distraction or danger to road users may be removed by Waka Kotahi or its agents without prior notice. Where a sign is removed the party will then be advised of the action taken and that the sign may be redeemed for a fee of \$50 to cover Waka Kotahi costs.

Thank you for your cooperation.

If you have any further queries, please contact Jude Ward, Waka Kotahi on (03) 964 2813 or [jude.ward@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:jude.ward@nzta.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely

**Mark Pinner**

Systems Manager  
Waka Kotahi

# **GENERAL ELECTION SIGN GUIDANCE**

External guidance

CONSENTS AND APPROVALS TEAM

31 AUGUST 2020

FINAL VERSION 1

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## **More information**

NZ Transport Agency  
August 2020

If you have further queries, call our contact centre on 0800 699 000 or write to us:

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This document is available on the NZ Transport Agency's website at <http://www.nzta.govt.nz>

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# REQUIREMENTS FOR SIGNS VISIBLE FROM A STATE HIGHWAY

The *Electoral (Advertisements of a Specified Kind) Regulations 2005* (the Electoral Regulations) sets out the requirements for electoral signs displayed in any public place (including those visible from the State Highway) or on a private property that do not exceed 3 m<sup>2</sup> in area. Signs greater than 3 m<sup>2</sup> in area are subject to the relevant District Plan standards and any bylaw managed by a local authority.

The Electoral Regulations sets out the following requirements for signs (including sandwich boards) that are located on the road, or are visible from the road:

<b>Lettering size</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Speed limit less than 70 km/hr: At least 120 mm</li><li>• Speed limit 70 km/hr or more: 160 mm</li></ul>
<b>Spacing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spacing between lines of text: at least 50 mm</li></ul>
<b>Reflective materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Signs must not be made of materials likely to reflect headlights from an approaching vehicle</li></ul>
<b>Colour/layout</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Must not be similar or the same as any traffic sign in shape and colour, and unlikely to be mistaken for a traffic sign or signal</li></ul>
<b>Moving parts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No moving parts, flashing or revolving mechanisms to attract attention permitted</li></ul>

The Electoral Regulations apply to any advertisement that encourages or persuades someone to vote for a registered political party or is used to promote or procure the election of a constituency candidate. The Electoral Regulations apply to the general election only, they do not apply to local election signs.

Local Election signs on or within the State Highway must comply with the New Zealand Transport Agency (Signs on State Highways) Bylaw 2010

Note: The Electoral Regulations do not apply to signage related to a referendum matter.

## SIGNS LOCATED ON THE STATE HIGHWAY

In addition to the *Electoral (Advertisements of a Specified Kind) Regulations 2005*, the *New Zealand Transport Agency (Signs on State Highways) Bylaw 2010* (the SH Bylaw) applies to election and referendum signage on a state highway. However, it does not apply to signage visible from a state highway but located on private property, or signage located on any section of state highway where the speed limit is 70 km/hr or less.

Electoral signage displayed on a state highway where the speed limit is above 70 km/hr will require approval from Waka Kotahi under the SH Bylaw. Signage in a location where the speed limit exceeds 70 km/hr will be considered in more detail than those located where the speed limit is less than 70 km/hr.

The following table sets out the requirements for signs under the SH Bylaw.

<b>Location</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A fixed sign must be located at least 5 m from the edge of the carriageway</li> <li>• The bottom edge of a sign must not be more than 2.5 m above road level or ground</li> <li>• Speed limit exceeds 70 km/hr: Must have an unrestricted view for a minimum of 180 m</li> <li>• Not be located within 100 m of an intersection or pedestrian crossing</li> <li>• Must be positioned at a right angle to the State Highway</li> </ul>
<b>Size</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Area:</b> Maximum of 1 m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• <b>Edge dimension:</b> 2 m maximum</li> </ul>
<b>Lettering size</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Speed limit 70 km/hr or less:</b> At least 120 mm</li> <li>• <b>Speed limit over 70 km/hr:</b> 160 mm</li> </ul>
<b>Spacing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Spacing between lines of text:</b> at least 50 mm</li> </ul>
<b>Reflective materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No reflective materials are permitted</li> </ul>
<b>Illumination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No external or internal illumination permitted</li> </ul>
<b>Sandwich boards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Speed limit 70 km/hr or less:</b> Must be located at least 2 m from the carriageway</li> </ul>
<b>Moving parts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No moving parts, flashing or revolving mechanisms to attract attention permitted</li> </ul>
<b>Sign supports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be frangible and meet the Waka Kotahi requirements regarding strength, rigidity and impact performance.</li> </ul>

## Additional Information

- The size of lettering and spacing requirements do not apply to the lettering on any party logo that is registered by the Electoral Commission under the Electoral Act 1993, the promoter statement or an advertisement of a specified kind published in a poster form that is less than 1,500 cm<sup>2</sup> in size.
- Electoral signage less than 3 m<sup>2</sup> in area is not required to meet the relevant district plan or local authority bylaw standards as this is managed by the Electoral Regulations.
- All signage exceeding 3 m<sup>2</sup> in area is subject to the relevant district plan and any local authority bylaw standards.
- Although the content and language cannot be further restricted by the SH Bylaw, general guidance on the number of words, symbols or graphics is set out in the SH Bylaw as follows:
  - Maximum of 6 words, symbols or graphics.
  - Characters: Maximum of 40 characters
  - Font: Acceptable (clear legible font) where the speed limit is more than 70 km/hr.
- The *State Highway Control Manual* provides further guidance for managing electoral signs on state highways. While the *State Highway Control Manual* and the *Traffic Control Devices Manual 2008* are guidelines only, there is a legal obligation for landowners to consult with Waka Kotahi and meet the Waka Kotahi general sign requirements.