

Memorandum

via Electronic Mail

Subject: **ACTION:** Interim Approval to Display More than Six Specific Service Logo Panels for a Type of Service

Date: September 21, 2006

From:  Jeffrey F. Paniati
Associate Administrator for Operations

Reply to
Attn. of: HOTO-1

To: Associate Administrators
Chief Counsel
Directors of Field Services
Resource Center Director and Operations Managers
Division Administrators
Federal Lands Highway Division Engineers

Purpose: The purpose of this memorandum is to issue an Interim Approval to allow State and local highway agencies the option of displaying up to 12 logo panels for any one specific service type (i.e., Gas, Food, Lodging, Camping, Attraction, and 24-Hour Pharmacy) by using no more than two specific service signs.

Background: The Specific Service Sign Program (also known as the Logo program) was established in 1969. This State-sponsored program provides the traveling public with information about specific motorist services available at approaching interchanges. Eligible service facilities can use their business identification logo for services and attractions. The MUTCD provides minimum parameters on the number, spacing and specific service types allowed on the signs, and the States develop policies and criteria for selecting the eligible businesses that appear on the signs.

The current MUTCD language limits the number of specific service signs along an interchange or intersection approach to four signs. Each of these four signs must be allocated to one of the following services types: Gas, Food, Lodging, Camping, Attraction, or 24-Hour Pharmacy. Each sign can display a maximum of 6 logo panels for any service type. No service type is allowed to appear on more than one sign.

The MUTCD establishes these guidelines to ensure that State implementation of the program does not introduce safety concerns. The current language in the MUTCD provides States flexibility with respect to the selection criteria for the specific service sign program. The FHWA believes that States are in the best position to determine local needs with respect to criteria for availability of the various types of services.

However, the FHWA recognizes that the demand for logo positions in the Specific Service Sign program has increased dramatically and that there is often significant competition for logo panels at an interchange.

Research on More Than Six Logo Panels: In May 2004, the FHWA approved a request from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to experiment with the food specific service signs in situations where there were more than six eligible food businesses at an interchange or intersection. In these situations, VDOT was allowed to use the empty space on the camping sign to display additional food logo panels. In cases where there were no camping services and therefore no camping sign, VDOT was allowed to install a second food specific service sign in the normal location of a camping sign. The VDOT submitted their final report in October 2005. Results from the surveys and crash analysis studies conducted by VDOT showed that displaying additional food logo panels on a second specific service sign when the first specific service sign is full did not create any additional safety risks and that there was a benefit to having additional information on food availability for the motorists. The complete evaluation study and report findings are posted on the Interim Approval page of the MUTCD website at <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov>.

FHWA Position: Based on Virginia's experimentation results, the FHWA is issuing this Interim Approval to give States and local highway authorities more flexibility on the selection of businesses based on local needs. The FHWA believes that the flexibility to add food logo panels can be extended to other service types, as long as the maximum of four signs on the approach is not exceeded.

Conditions of Interim Approval: Interim Approval for the option of displaying up to 12 logo panels for any one specific service type will be granted to any jurisdiction that submits a written request to the Office of Transportation Operations. A State may request Interim Approval for all jurisdictions in that State. Jurisdictions using traffic control devices under an Interim Approval must agree to maintain an inventory list of all locations where the devices are placed and to comply with item F at the bottom of page 1A-6 of the 2003 MUTCD, Section 1A.10 which requires:

"An agreement to restore the site(s) of the Interim Approval to a condition that complies with the provisions in this Manual within 3 months following the issuance of a Final Rule on this traffic control device. This agreement must also provide that the agency sponsoring the Interim Approval will terminate use of the device or application installed under the Interim Approval at any time that it determines significant safety concerns are directly or indirectly attributable to the device or application. The FHWA Office of Transportation Operations has the right to terminate the Interim Approval at any time if there is an indication of safety concerns."

If an agency opts to use this Interim Approval, the following design and operational requirements shall apply, and shall take precedence over any conflicting provisions of existing Section 2F.02 of the 2003 MUTCD for the interchanges and intersection approaches where the option granted under this Interim Approval is exercised:

- A maximum of 12 logo panels may be displayed on no more than two signs at any interchange or intersection approach for any one of the following specific service types: Gas, Food, Lodging, Camping, Attraction, and 24-hour Pharmacy.
- The additional logo panels may be displayed by either: (1) Sharing the empty space with another specific service type or (2) Using a separate specific service sign in situations where there are fewer than four specific service signs at an interchange or intersection approach.
- Each specific service sign shall be limited to no more than six logo panels.
- No specific service type shall appear on more than two specific service signs.
- No more than three types of services shall be represented on any one sign or sign assembly (See MUTCD Section 2F.02).
- If three types of services are shown on one sign, then the logo panels shall be limited to two for each service and if two types of services are displayed on one sign, there shall be no more than four logo panels for any one of the two service types (See MUTCD Sections 2F.02 and 2F.04).
- The legend and logo panels applicable to a service type shall be displayed such that the road user will not associate them with another service type on the same sign (See MUTCD Figure 2F-1). When more than one service type is displayed, the logo panels for each service must be separated.
- The number of Specific Service signs along an approach to an interchange or intersection, regardless of the number of service types displayed, shall be limited to a maximum of four (See MUTCD Section 2F.02).
- Specific Service ramp signs shall only be installed along the ramp or at the ramp terminal for facilities that have logo panels displayed along the main roadway. Ramp logo panels may be omitted if the facilities are readily visible from the ramp terminal (see MUTCD Section 2F.07). The spacing between ramp signs should be determined based on an engineering study that considers factors such as the length of the ramp and the safe mobility needs of the road user. In some cases, it might not be feasible to install all four Specific Service signs on the mainline because of the ramp constraints. An order of priority is especially critical where space is limited for sign installation and there is a demand for different types of ramp signs. Regulatory and warning information should be displayed rather than guide signing in cases where conflicts occur (see MUTCD Section 2A.16).

- The successive order for Specific Service signs (i.e., 24-hour Pharmacy, Attraction, Camping, Lodging, Food, and Gas) as discussed in MUTCD Section 2F.02 will not be required for purposes of this interim approval. For example if the Specific Service signs in the direction approaching the exit ramp are currently one for lodging, one for food and one for gas, then you can add a 4th Specific Service sign for food in the location preceding the lodging sign. You would not have to move the lodging sign.

Any questions concerning this Interim Approval should be directed to Ms. Linda Brown at Linda.L.Brown@dot.gov or by telephone at 202-366-2192.