

# TRAFFIC AND SAFETY INFORMATIONAL SERIES

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION #6

### **Why Can't I Place a Business-Related Sign within the Roadway Right-of-Way?**

Many businesses rely on the use of signs to direct customers to their place of business. It is therefore understandable why some business owners would like to have their business signs posted along the road.

However, for the safety of all motorists, the number, type, and placement of signs along the road are regulated, and all signs placed in the roadway right-of-way must be officially authorized. While business owners are not permitted to place their own signs, authorized signs include “service” or “logo” signs that help direct motorists to area businesses.

#### **Signs, signposts, and the placement of signs are regulated in the right-of-way**

Because nonstandard signs and the unauthorized placement of signs can be hazardous to motorists, standards have been established to increase the safety and effectiveness of the signs that are placed. Only signs with breakaway signposts are authorized because the use of non-breakaway poles can increase the severity of crashes. The distance of signs from the roadway and the spacing between signs are also regulated to reduce the number and severity of crashes. See Code of Iowa Section 319.12 for more detail.

#### **The dangers of too many signs**

An excessive number of signs along the roadway increases the possibility that drivers will miss important warning, regulatory, or directional messages. If a business-related directional sign were placed within the roadway right-of-way for every business in an area, the large number of signs might decrease the usefulness any given sign—be it a warning sign or a sign for an area business—sometimes with severe consequences.

#### **Signs that are safe and useful**

For the reasons above, only signs that fulfill an essential need are typically authorized within a roadway's right-of-way. Service or logo signs that direct motorists to essential services—hospitals, gas, food, lodging, camping, and the like—are allowed in some cases if properly designed and placed. These signs are generally installed along freeways and expressways and can also include business logos and tourist-oriented directional signs.

#### **For more information**

For more information, please contact \_\_\_\_\_.