

PLACEMENT OF POLITICAL SIGNS

To All Candidates for Political Office:

Traffic safety should be of the utmost consideration in placement of political signs or posters. Candidates and/or their campaign workers should take great care not to place signs or posters where the same could create a traffic hazard. For example, signs or posters should not be placed at or near intersections where they could obstruct the view of on-coming traffic to the motorist entering the intersection. Also, signs or posters should not be erected on or in any manner so as to interfere with the effectiveness of traffic control devices.



Acceptable display would be those posters or signs affixed to their own stake or post and set in the ground well outside the traveled portion of the highway, or, with the owner's consent and permission, attached to a building or dwelling, or displayed on vehicles or in the windows of establishments, and in other like manner.

Current statutory and regulatory requirements applicable to placement of roadside posters and signs advertising candidacy are covered under the provisions of 23 M.R.S.A., Section 1913-A and MDOT Department Regulations. Political posters and signs may be erected and maintained as follows:

1. May be erected on private property **outside** the Right of Way limits of public ways at any time prior to an election, primary or referendum, limited in size to a maximum of 50 square feet;
2. May be erected **within** the Right of Way limits of public ways no sooner than six (6) weeks prior to an election, primary or referendum and must be removed by the candidate or political committee no later than one week following the date of the election, primary or referendum;
3. **Prohibited practices:** political posters and signs shall not be erected or maintained on any traffic control signs or devices, public utility poles or fixtures, upon any trees or painted or drawn upon rocks or other natural features;
4. No person shall place, maintain or display upon or in view of any highway any unauthorized sign, signal, marking or device which purports to be or is an **imitation of or resembles an official traffic-control device**, such as a stop sign;
5. Political signs may be displayed to view to all public ways **except** for the Interstate Highway System. Title 23, MRSA §1913-A, paragraph 3 regulations, sub-paragraph 6 interstate system states that: **Signs may not be placed within the limits of any controlled access highway nor erected within 660 ft. of the nearest edge of the Interstate Highway System in such a manner that the message may be read from the Interstate Highway.** All signs located at interstate interchanges are in violation and will be removed.
6. **Municipal ordinances** advocating stricter control take precedence over state law. (See reverse side of this handout.)

The Maine Department of Transportation recognizes that most "violations" are the result of the efforts of ardent workers who do not know the law. It is therefore suggested that this information be passed on to them. **Maine Department of Transportation Maintenance employees will have instructions to remove all improperly placed or maintained political posters and signs.** MDOT asks candidates for their full cooperation in its endeavor to prevent an unsightly, indiscriminate and uncontrolled display of election campaign posters throughout the state and also to prevent any possible embarrassment to political candidates.

The unauthorized removal or destruction of political signs is a civil violation under Maine law (Title 23, Section 1917-A), and may carry a fine of up to \$250. Specifically, the law states that *“a person who takes, defaces or disturbs a lawfully placed sign bearing political messages relating to a general election, primary election or referendum commits a civil violation for which a forfeiture of up to \$250 may be adjudged.”*

The law does not apply to a person authorized by a candidate or political committee to remove signs placed by or at the direction of that candidate or political committee. It also does not apply to the landowner, or agent of the landowner, on whose property a sign has been placed.

A candidate or candidate’s committee would file a complaint with the local police and/or brought to the District Attorney’s office for appropriate action.



ADDITIONAL CITY OF BANGOR REGULATIONS & GUIDELINES:

Signs are prohibited in all city parks and on all city-owned property. The grassy area between the street and the sidewalk is considered to be part of the right-of-way; therefore signs may be placed in the esplanade areas of all parks. ***Please take care not to allow the signs to spread from the esplanade area into the actual park area.*** To facilitate grass mowing operations, signs in the esplanade area may be temporarily moved and replaced by city staff. In the event of snow, snow removal operations will take precedence over moving signage; therefore, political signs in the esplanade area will likely be damaged by snow removal operations. Candidates are encouraged to remove signs prior to any major snow event.

When placing signs in the esplanade area in residential neighborhoods, candidates or political parties are urged to get permission from the adjacent property owner prior to placing the sign. Although it is not required, it is good public relations to do so.

Any signs that are deemed a traffic hazard or are otherwise improperly placed will be removed by Code Enforcement, Public Works, Parks & Recreation or the Police Department. The removed signs are dropped off at City Hall on the back loading dock (on the right hand side of the building). Candidates are encouraged to pick up their signs at their convenience. Signs that are not picked up within one week after the election will be discarded.

Candidates are reminded that no political advertising is allowed within 250’ of the entrance to the polling place. This includes the polling places for absentee voting, i.e. City Hall and the Civic Center. Please review the Restricted Area Maps to identify the 250’ area. City staff will relocate any signs within the 250’ restricted area to an area outside this zone.

Should you have a complaint of sign damage or removal (by someone other than a city employee) you should contact the Police Department.