



SIGNING POLICY

Introduction

Clear and efficient signing is not only an essential part of traffic engineering; it is a vital part of any road journey. Road users of all types, pedestrians, cyclists and drivers alike, all depend on clear and effective signing for information and guidance. Roads Authorities, such as the City of Edinburgh Council, rely on signs to permit the effective operation and enforcement of traffic regulations, to control traffic movements and, most importantly, as an aid to the safety of all road users.

In order to ensure that the message on any sign serves its intended purpose it is imperative that road signs impart their message both clearly and at the most appropriate time. The message on any sign, whether giving directions, acting as a warning of a possible hazard ahead or advising of the effect of a restriction, must be unambiguous and speedily understood. Providing the necessary information at the correct point during any journey is fundamental to the effectiveness of any road sign.

Roads authorities are responsible for ensuring the correct standards of signing on roads within their area; only they can erect traffic signs or permit their erection. With the exception of the signs on the Trunk Road Network, the City Of Edinburgh Council is responsible for the provision of all road signs in the Edinburgh area.

Signs – In General

Although the term ‘signs’ is generally taken to refer simply to traffic signs on posts, signing also encompasses road markings, traffic bollards, traffic signals and many other devices.

Regardless of its specific type, each and every sign erected within the Edinburgh area must comply with the current *Traffic Signs Regulations And General Directions*. The use, and design, of each sign must also follow the guidelines stated in the *Traffic Signs Manual*. Between them, these Statutory Instruments indicate which signs are currently permitted on our roads, as well as where, and under what circumstances, each sign type may be used.

The use of many signs, including warning, regulatory and general directional signing, is already well regulated by these Statutory Instruments. Such signs may only be used in specific circumstances and do not require local authorities to develop independent policies to govern their use.

There are, however, other types of sign that may be provided at the discretion of individual local roads authorities. These types of sign are generally provided in order to provide the road user with additional local information over and above necessary route and road safety information.

This document seeks to set out the Council’s policy with regard to some of the more commonly requested types of discretionary signing.

The types of sign covered by this policy are:

- Local direction;
- Tourist;
- Off-Street Car Parks, and
- Temporary Signing.

The primary aims of this policy will be to:

- standardise the use of certain sign types throughout the Edinburgh area;
- regulate the types of destination that will be considered permanent signs;
- regulate the overall number of permanent signs provided;
- closely regulate the use of temporary signing;
- reduce the overall impact of signing in high amenity or conservation areas.

Sign Clutter

There can be no doubt that extensive signing can, in many circumstances, be visually intrusive. We are, in Edinburgh, fortunate to have not only a historic city centre attracting many thousands of visitors every year, but also that our city and the surrounding area is comprised of both urban and rural villages, many of which are either conservation or high amenity areas retaining village atmosphere and character.

Excessive, and more importantly unnecessary, levels of discretionary signing of the type covered by this policy can, however, quickly detract from the character of such an area.

In many instances individual new signs have been added to locations where existing signs were already in place. The added intrusion caused by the continual addition of new signs, often of different sizes, shapes and even colour can easily be avoided through the amalgamation of several destinations onto single signs.

Similarly, the introduction of innovative new methods of signing tourist attractions, especially where the emphasis is now on providing information primarily for pedestrians, will permit the removal of a significant number of now redundant signs within the affected areas.

A recent initiative to reduce the visual intrusion caused by unnecessary, or even poorly sited, signing has resulted in visible improvements to the streetscape of the High Street. As this policy, and other ongoing initiatives designed to tackle the issue of clutter are implemented, we will ensure that the character of our city centre and other high amenity areas is protected.

In terms of the visual intrusion caused by signs, by strictly controlling the:

- types of destination that will be permitted signing;
- extent to which they are signed;
- numbers of signs permitted;
- rationalisation of existing signing wherever possible;

it will be possible to provide a useful level of information to road users at an appropriate stage of their journey, whilst lessening the overall impact and intrusion of the signs themselves.

Local Direction Signing

Local Direction Signing is, as the name suggests, intended to provide local information to road users towards the end of their journey. Such signs are, therefore, located within relatively close proximity to the destination. In general it will be appropriate to provide this form of signing from the nearest main bus route. The use of such signs on the city's busier thoroughfares will be minimised where possible.

Signing will normally be considered to destinations of the following types:

➤ Council operated facilities such as:

- Schools
- Libraries
- Community Centres
- Public Toilets

➤ Other Local Amenities such as:

- Hospitals and Medical Centres
- Railway Stations
- Bus Stations

Local destination signing is provided at the discretion of the Council. It will not be appropriate to provide signs to each and every destination.

For example, it will not normally be considered appropriate to permit local direction signing to:

- Individual businesses
- Private Clubs requiring membership
- Tourist attractions (*See section on Tourist Signing*)

In general, destinations applying for signing should meet the following requirements:

Destinations applicable for signing:

- should be remote from either main roads or bus routes;
- must not be readily apparent from the nearest main road;
- must be open to the public during reasonable hours or during predetermined times throughout the year;

- and have the facility for visitors to arrive without requiring membership or being required to pre-book;
- should normally have their own off-street parking facilities;
- should be generally open to all members of the public;
- must not include any wording that could be considered to form an advertisement for any premises.

Local Destinations should be encouraged to provide as much information as possible to allow potential visitors to easily find the destination.

All Local Direction Signing to particular destinations will normally be provided at the applicant's expense. In order to reduce the potential for sign clutter the Council will reserve the right to rationalise existing signing where new local direction signing is being provided. The cost of any rationalisation will also need to be met by the applicant.

All permanent signs will remain the property of the City Of Edinburgh Council.

All signs erected within the authority area will be maintained by the Transport Function of the City Development Department. The cost of any repair work or sign replacement required as a result of natural wear and tear of the sign or its associated mountings, or any upgrading of the sign requested by the applicant may, however, need to be met by the applicant.

Tourist Signing

Tourism is important economically for Edinburgh. The history, architecture and international events such as the Festival, Fringe and the Hogmanay celebrations attract thousands of visitors to our city every year.

In 1995, in appreciation of its history and architecture, the city centre was designated as a World Heritage Site.

To ensure that tourists exploring our city find the attraction they wish to visit, it is important to sign potential tourist destinations in a clear and comprehensive manner.

Tourist Signing - General

Scottish Office Circular 27/1995 defines the types of facility that are considered to be 'Tourist Attractions' and the means by which attractions may be signed. All tourist signing in Scotland must comply with this Circular.

Eligibility for tourist signing is dependent on the attraction having been accredited by Visit Scotland. Local Authorities may only consider permanent tourist signing to attractions that take part in their Visitor Attraction Scheme. Accreditation allows the member attraction the right to apply for nationally recognised brown tourist signs including, in Scotland, the 'Thistle' symbol.

Accreditation should not be seen by the attraction as a guarantee that signs will be provided. The provision of any sign, the text, overall design and locations of any signs will remain solely at the discretion of the Council. All signing will be required to comply with the general conditions of this policy.

Signing to attractions must be provided at no cost to the Council. Attractions will, therefore, be expected to reimburse the Council for the cost of any work undertaken to provide previously agreed signing. Circular 27/1995 also advises that the ongoing maintenance costs associated with tourist signs should also be met by the attraction. The cost of any repair work or sign replacement required as a result of natural wear and tear of the sign or its associated mountings or any upgrading of the sign requested by the applicant will, however, need to be met in full by the attraction.

In order to reduce the potential for sign clutter the Council will reserve the right to rationalise existing signing where new tourist signing is being provided. The cost of any rationalisation will also need to be met by the applicant.

All permanent signs will, however, remain the property of the City Of Edinburgh Council.

The World Heritage Site

By far the easiest way to explore the City Centre's many varied attractions is on foot. With this in mind, the City Centre's network of *Navigator Posts* has been designed to provide consistent tourist information for pedestrians. The network currently covers the majority of the city centre, although future phases of *Navigator Posts* may see the network eventually extended to include other areas of the city.

Each post contains a general map of the city centre, a map local to the individual location and a detailed list of the city's places of interest, Theatres, Galleries and Museums. Also included is other useful information such as a street index for the city centre and the locations of other local amenities e.g. police stations, hospitals, off-street parking and public toilets.

Within the City Centre, and in particular the World Heritage Site, the *Navigator Posts* are considered to be the only means of signing tourist attractions. No new applications for permanent brown tourist signing will be considered within the city centre and no new permanent signs will be provided to existing attractions.

Implementation of this policy will also result in existing signs to established attractions being removed. Wherever possible redundant poles used to mount such signs will also be removed.

As alternative forms of signing are extended to cover other areas of the city, so will the policy of reducing, and removing, any existing tourist signing be extended. The use of *Navigator* style signing in any part of the Edinburgh area will generally preclude the use of other forms of tourist signing within the affected areas.

A system similar to the Navigator Posts has already been utilised within Leith.

Outwith The World Heritage Site

Whilst no new applications within the World Heritage Site will be considered, attractions located in other areas may still apply for tourist signing, subject to certain conditions. These are:

- Signs will generally only be provided from the nearest main road or bus route, depending on the location of the attraction;
- Attractions should be regularly open to the public during reasonable hours of the day, or during significant, pre-determined periods throughout the year;
- It must be possible for a member of the public to visit the attraction/take part/use their main facilities without having made an advance booking;

- Attractions should normally have their own, private, off-street parking facilities;
- Tourist signing will not generally be considered appropriate to purely commercial enterprises. Signs will only be permitted to attractions or places of interest;
- Signing will not normally be permitted to Hotels, Guest Houses or Restaurants within Edinburgh's city limits (or within the signed limits of surrounding towns or suburbs such as Queensferry, Kirkliston, Currie, Balerno etc). The majority of these facilities are located on major routes, onto which visitors are already directed;
- Hotels, Guest Houses and Restaurants located in rural Edinburgh, i.e. outwith the signed limits of Edinburgh (or surrounding towns/suburbs) will be considered for signing in line with the guidelines for other attractions;

Attractions will be expected to provide as much information as possible so as to give visitors reasonable directions to the attraction. How this is achieved will be the responsibility of each attraction, but typical examples would be to include maps or directions to the attraction on leaflets, advertisements or on their own web site. Signing should not replace the need for attractions to provide this information. Tourist signing will complement the information provided by attractions through advertising, giving local directions to visitors nearing the end of their journey.

Use of the City Bypass should be maximised for distributing tourists around the city. Attractions will be encouraged to direct visitors onto the nearest radial route via the appropriate junction on the City Bypass. This will reduce the need for extensive signing on the primary road network and will aid in the reduction of the number of journeys through the city.

Off Street Car Parks

Although visitors to the city centre are encouraged to do so by public transport, many visitors will arrive by private car. Where on-street parking provision provides for short stay parking within the city centre, visitors wishing to stay for longer periods are encouraged to use one of the off-street car parks.

Visitors arriving in this manner may potentially be unfamiliar with the location of suitable parking facilities. It is, therefore, important to ensure that they are efficiently directed toward an appropriate off-street car park.

In terms of existing facilities recent years have seen significant changes to both the number and location of off-street car parks within the city centre. Where some of the smaller car parks have now been lost through development, other major developments have included parking facilities that may be used by the general public.

Although car parks are, in the strictest sense, local destinations, it is not considered appropriate to treat these facilities in exactly the same way as other local destinations. In short, signing to car parking facilities should not be restricted to being provided only from the nearest main route.

General guidelines on the signing of car parks are as follows:

- Signing of city centre car parks will only commence upon entry into the city centre itself. It is not considered necessary to indicate the presence of car parking facilities from further afield. Road users will generally look for an indication of such facilities near the end of their journey;
- Signing of individually named car parks will commence on the nearest radial route, and will then lead along appropriate other routes toward the destination;
- It will be possible, and most likely preferable, to sign car parks from more than one main route or radial to ensure that road users are provided with the maximum of information;
- Where applicable directions to multiple car parks will be amalgamated onto single signs, thereby offering visitors a choice of facility within specific geographical areas of the city centre;
- The Council is investigating the possibility of extending/upgrading the existing parking guidance system to provide accurate and concise real-time information on off-street parking availability.
- The Council is investigating the possibility of indicating the direction to alternative facilities within the same vicinity should the chosen car park already be full;

- The Council will consider the inclusion of car park information on direction signing at major junctions within the city centre as both a means of linking car parking facilities into signed and named areas and as a means of reducing the overall number of signs;

It is normal practice to provide signs to car parks when requested by the car park operator. It is, however, considered that the need for signing to new car parks should be identified within the planning process. The developer of any site intended to include public off-street parking should be advised of the potential need for signing and would then be required to provide any necessary signing as part of the development. Developers must liaise closely with the Council on the content and positioning of any proposed signing.

Although it is anticipated that the majority of car park signing will take the form of fixed signs, the Council may decide to complement these by use of variable message signing similar to that already in place. Car parks providing greater than 50 spaces for use by the public will be encouraged to be included on this system.

Whether provided as part of the development, or requested by the car park operator, all car park signing should be provided at no cost to the Council. The Council may provide all appropriate signing on behalf of the developer/operator on the understanding that any costs incurred will be recoverable.

All permanent signs will remain the property of, and be maintained by, the City Of Edinburgh Council.

Temporary Signing

In some instances the provision of permanent signing is simply not considered to be a viable option. Such instances would normally consist of events taking place over a short period of time or where the signed destination would not otherwise be considered eligible for permanent signs.

In these circumstances provisions exist within the applicable regulations to permit the provision of temporary signing.

Temporary signing can be effectively split into two distinct types.

- Related to works or conditions on the road network
- Related to events etc remote from the Road Network

Related to Works or Conditions on the Road Network

This type of temporary sign is provided by Roads Authorities, their contractors, public utility contractors etc for the purpose of imparting important information relating directly to the status of the road network to road users.

Such signing may be used to indicate the effect of a road closure, diversion or other restriction on traffic movement, to direct traffic to, from or around a major event, or to advise of a change in road layout. The provision of such signing is required in order to adequately inform road users of likely restrictions.

This policy is not intended to affect the Council's, or any other parties', responsibility to provide this form of signing.

Related to Events etc Remote from the Road Network

Temporary signs considered to be unrelated to the road network are those that are provided solely for the purpose of directing road users to temporary events or destinations that would not otherwise be eligible for signing.

Typical examples of instances where such temporary directional signing might be used would be:

- Fringe or festival concerts, venues or events;
- Sporting Events;
- Open Days;
- Opening of new public facilities;
- Exhibitions; or
- New Housing Developments;

It is this type of temporary signing that this policy seeks to regulate.

Temporary Signing - General

The Council receives a large number of applications for such signing each year. In line with policies on other forms of signing, that seek to limit the unnecessary intrusion of excessive signing wherever possible, it is considered appropriate to strictly control the level of temporary event signing that is permitted within the Edinburgh area.

Temporary signing of this type is generally provided by a third party. Under the terms of the Roads Scotland Act (1984) only Roads Authorities may provide, or authorise the provision of, any sign on roads within their area. This effectively means the roads authority must specifically grant permission for each and every temporary sign before any sign can be erected on-street.

Temporary signs must also be erected, maintained and removed at no cost to the Council. The sign provider will remain responsible for ensuring that:

- the signs are designed and manufactured to the appropriate standards and using appropriate materials;
- are mounted safely and securely with the appropriate fixings;
- are removed immediately the sign has served its purpose;

Where applicable the Council may require, in writing, the removal or repair of any temporary sign. If the sign is not removed or repaired within the time period specified by the Council, the Council may elect to undertake the work. All costs involved in such work will be recoverable from the sign provider.

Failure to adhere to the terms of this policy, or with any subsequent agreement made between the sign provider and the Council, may preclude the sign provider from any future consent to erect signs on any roads within the Edinburgh area.

The provision of any temporary sign will remain entirely at the discretion of the Director Of City Development.

Temporary Signing - Events

Inside The World Heritage Site

No temporary signing will be permitted within the World Heritage Site unless required in exceptional circumstances.

Any applicant wishing to erect temporary event signing within the World Heritage Site will be required to provide written justification for the proposed signing. Providing such justification will not be considered a guarantee that permission to erect any sign will be granted.

Where signs are to be permitted, the level of signing will be determined by the Director Of City Development but will broadly follow the guidelines for temporary signing outwith the World Heritage Site.

As with all other applications the applicant must have written authorisation from the Director Of City Development prior to any sign being erected.

Outwith The World Heritage Site

The general guidelines on temporary event signing in the Edinburgh area are as follows:

- Only events taking place within venues without permanent signing will be considered eligible for temporary signs;
- Temporary signing will not be permitted as a means of advertisement. The legend on each sign will be sufficient only to indicate to potential visitors the nature of the event;
- Signed destinations should be regularly open to the public. It must be possible for a member of the public to visit the signed destination/take part/use their main facilities without having made an advance booking, unless the sign legend specifically indicates otherwise, i.e. "Conference";
- Temporary signing will not generally be considered appropriate to purely commercial enterprises. Signs will only be permitted to events or attractions;
- Where an event or attraction takes place within commercial premises (Hotels etc) the sign legend will consist only of the event name, not the name of the premises;
- Temporary signing will commence from the nearest main arterial route.
- All signs must be specifically authorised in writing by the Director Of City Development prior to any sign being erected;

The Director Of City Development may vary the stated policy in the case of major events such as the Royal Highland Show or major sporting events, or in other exceptional circumstances.

In respect of the Edinburgh Festival and Fringe, the following requirements will apply in addition to the above policy:

- Destinations eligible for signing should normally have their own, private, off-street parking facilities;
- Temporary signs may bear only the venue number and an indication of whether the event is related to the official Festival, the Fringe or the Jazz Festival.

Temporary Signing - Housing Developments

In May 1993 the Scottish Office Industry Department issued guidelines for the use of the newly introduced housing development signs. These guidelines gave Councils the authorisation to use such signs and indicated the circumstances in which they were appropriate.

The introduction of this sign type was a reflection of the traffic management need to direct interested parties towards new developments using the most suitable route.

A brief outline of the guidelines (circular 5/93) is as follows:

- Only developments with a minimum of 30 bedrooms would be eligible;
- Developers would be required to show special reasons for requiring signs from greater than ½ a mile, or two junctions, from the development;
- The signs should be erected only once work has commenced on the site substructures (i.e. roads etc) and should be removed within 3 months of the sale of 80% of the properties;
- There should be no cost to the roads authority, with developers being recommended to enter into an agreement with the roads authority regarding payment prior to signs being provided;
- Signs can only be erected by the roads authority unless they specifically authorise individual developers to provide the signs on their behalf;

Whilst seeking to regulate the use of such signs, these guidelines allow developers the flexibility to erect significant numbers of signs in the area surrounding their development. It is imperative that temporary signing of this type, either by its' nature or by its' volume, is not materially detrimental to the impact of permanent signing placed on-street for reasons of road safety, route direction or the general management of traffic movement.

It is, therefore, proposed that the following local guidelines be applied to signing of this type:

- All signs must be specifically authorised in writing by the Director Of City Development prior to any sign being erected;
- Developers will be required to submit an anticipated sign removal date with their application and to advise the Council of any revision to that date. Unless otherwise agreed all signs will require to be removed by the initial date provided;

- Signs will only be permitted from the main bus route (or routes) directly adjacent to the development;
- No sign will be permitted to bear the name or logo of the developer, only the name of the development will be permitted;
- Sign sizes should be minimised wherever possible. The applicant must indicate the proposed sign sizes as part of their application;
- No sign greater than 0.3metres² in area will be permitted on any lamp column;
- The minimum mounting height for any sign located above a footway will be 2.25metres, or 2.40metres above a cycleway;
- All signs must comply with the Traffic Signs Regulations And General Directions 2002 in terms of general layout and with the Traffic Signs Manual in terms of design, materials used and placement on-street;

The requirement stated within circular 5/93 that developers must obtain permission to erect signs requires the roads authority to have an administrative system in place to effectively deal with such applications. This requirement also places a responsibility upon that authority to ensure that any signs permitted are erected, maintained and removed in a manner that is safe for all road users.

Whilst this is true of all temporary signing, in the particular case of housing developments such signs are being provided to wholly commercial enterprises, and may be in place for extended periods of time whilst the development is completed and the properties sold. Although there may be traffic management justification for such signing, it is clear that the ability to provide signs on-street directing road users towards housing developments provides developers with a useful means of advertising the property for sale.

Whilst the Council is obliged to erect, and permit the erection, of such signs as are required for reasons of road safety and traffic management, providing or permitting signs that effectively advertise wholly commercial destinations has effectively been discouraged throughout the Edinburgh area. In the case of housing developments, however, the provision of such signs is specifically permitted by the current Regulations.

As a reflection of the particular nature of this type of signing, and its' material difference to other types of temporary signing, it is considered appropriate to make an administration charge for each sign for which we grant permission.

This charge will cover the cost incurred by the Council of:

- an inspection of the intended locations of signs to ensure suitability;

- an inspection of the signs once erected to ensure that they comply with this policy and the appropriate legislation;
- an inspection of the sign locations to ensure that the signs have been removed once their purpose has been served;
- all administration required as part of the authorisation process;

Where a developer fails to properly:

- Design;
- Erect;
- Maintain; or
- Remove when required;

any sign permitted under the terms of this policy, or erects additional signs over and above those permitted, the developer will be required to make the necessary alterations or repairs to permitted signs, or to remove any unauthorised signing. If the developer fails to carry out the necessary work within the time period specified, this work may be undertaken by the Council and the developer will be charged a fixed amount to cover any costs that the Council may incur.

Failure to adhere to the terms of this policy, or with any subsequent agreement made between the developer and the Council, may preclude that developer from any future consent to erect signs on any roads within the Edinburgh area.

Charges – Housing Development Signing

Administrative charge for the authorisation process: £100 per sign

Cost of the removal or repair of any sign: £200 per sign

It is recommended that developers be advised of the need to apply for permission for temporary signing to new housing developments, and the associated costs, during the planning process.