

Memorandum

Subject: **INFORMATION:** Policy for Messages
on Dynamic Message Signs (DMS)

Date: **February 9, 2006**

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Reply to
Attn. of: HOTM-1

To: Division Administrators
Directors of Field Services
Resource Center Director and Operations Manager
Federal Lands Highway Division Engineers

Because we have received a number of questions from Division Offices and other sources asking about the appropriateness of certain messages proposed for display on dynamic message signs (DMS), this memorandum reiterates the policy guidance for the use of DMS.

The basic policy for the appropriate use of DMS is contained in a January 2001 memorandum that responds to a request from the Pennsylvania Division. The memorandum is available on the FHWA Web site at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legregs/directives/policy/pame.htm>. In referencing the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, the memorandum notes that dynamic message signs shall display pertinent traffic operational and guidance information only, not advertising. Further, the content of a DMS message should be based on requiring the motorist to take an action. However, operational, road condition, and driver safety focused messages are acceptable to be displayed on a DMS. If driver safety focused messages are to be displayed on a DMS, they should be kept current and relate to a specific campaign. The period of time that a specific message is displayed for a safety campaign should be limited to a few weeks.

Additional memorandums clarified this policy as it relates to safety campaigns such as "Click-It-or-Ticket" (http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/res-memorandum_clickit.htm), AMBER Alert messages (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legregs/directives/policy/ambermemo.htm>), and emergency security messages (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legregs/directives/policy/securmemo.htm>). All of these memorandums are available under the Operations section of the FHWA Policy Memorandums Web site, <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legregs/directives/policy/>.

A July 2004 memorandum provided recommended practice and guidance for DMS. This memorandum, available at http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/travelinfo/resources/cms_rept/travtime.htm, recommends providing travel time messages on DMS where appropriate. It is important that these DMS assets and investments be used more effectively to provide motorists with meaningful and useful

information. Providing travel time information is an excellent method of notifying motorists about current conditions in a manner that can be easily interpreted and understood.

I encourage you to use this policy guidance in any discussions or reviews related to DMS with your State and local partners. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Bob Rupert at (202) 366-2194 or Robert.Rupert@fhwa.dot.gov.