

Introduction

The Iowa Billboard Control Law (Iowa Code Chapter 306C) requires the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) to install signs along interstate and freeway rights-of-way to inform motorists about nearby services. This program, known as Logo Signing, helps drivers locate GAS, FOOD, LODGING, CAMPING, and ATTRACTION services at upcoming interchanges. It is not intended for general advertising. (Iowa Administrative Code: 761 IAC 118.4)

Eligible businesses may display a business sign (featuring their name, logo, or trademark) on a specific information panel – an official highway sign showing available services and directions. Businesses must meet criteria outlined in this guide, apply, pay required fees, and supply a sign that meets DOT specifications.

General Information

1. The DOT handles all installation, maintenance, removal, and replacement of signs. Public access to the interstate/freeway right-of-way is illegal.
2. Business signs must meet DOT standards and must not mislead, be unsightly, or deteriorated.
3. Annual fee: \$230 per sign (paid in advance).
4. The DOT is not liable for damage due to vandalism or natural events. Replacement requires a new or refurbished sign and a \$50 service charge.

Eligibility Criteria

Business signs are allowed along the main highway if the following criteria are met:

1. Non-Discrimination

Businesses must provide written assurance of compliance with all public accommodation laws (no discrimination based on race, religion, color, age, sex, or national origin).

2. Distance Requirement

Services must be within 3 miles of the interchange. Exceptions may apply based on space available on the signs—contact the Iowa DOT's Advertising Management Office.

3. GAS Services

Must provide:

- Required licensing
- Fuel services (gas or alternative fuels, oil, water)
- Free air for tires
- Restrooms and drinking water
- Public telephone
- Open 12 hours/day, 7 days/week, year-round
- Card-operated fuel stations may be allowed as exceptions

4. FOOD Services

Must have:

- Required licensing
- Open 6 days/week, 40+ hours/week, year-round
- Serve at least two meals/day
 - Breakfast must be served by 10 a.m. and include standard items (e.g., eggs, pancakes, toast) and at least two beverages (coffee, juice, etc.)
- Seating for minimum 10 people
- Public telephone

5. LODGING

Must have:

- Required licensing
- At least 10 sleeping units, each with a bathroom (B&Bs must have at least 2 guest rooms and shared or private bathrooms)
- Public telephone

6. CAMPING

Must include:

- At least 20 campsites or parking spaces
- Required licensing
- Adequate parking
- Public telephone
- Agreement to either:
 - Remove or cover signs during off-season, or
 - Display operational months on the sign

7. ATTRACTIONS

Must:

- Have appropriate licensing
- Be regionally or nationally recognized
- Be of significant interest to travelers
- Fit at least one category:
 - Natural area, historical/cultural site, museum, science center
 - Accredited 4-year college/university, religious site, outdoor recreation area
 - Winery, brewery, distillery with tours/tasting/gift shop
 - Amusement park, zoo, botanical garden, casino
 - Stadium, arena, coliseum, or racetrack (min. 5,000 seats)
 - Antique mall (20,000+ sq. ft.) or cluster of 8+ antique shops
 - Shopping mall/outlet with 50+ permanent stores
 - Sporting goods/recreation store with 100,000+ sq. ft.
 - Designated cultural/entertainment district with signage plan

Also required:

- 40+ operating hours/week over 5+ days (stadiums and similar venues exempt)
- Restrooms and drinking water
- Adequate parking
- Seasonal signage compliance (removal or operational months posted)
- Public telephone

Additional Guidelines

8. Businesses in violation of Iowa Code Sections 306C.11 or 306C.13 (illegal signage) are ineligible for logo signing.
9. If a business's on-site sign is not visible from the ramp, a ramp sign is required—unless design or spacing restrictions prevent it.
10. If the business is not located directly off the interchange road, trailblazing signs may be installed on nearby roads to guide travelers. No fee is charged for these signs.
11. This guide is intended to summarize the complete requirements which can be found in Iowa Administrative Code: 761 IAC 118.

Logo Business Sign

Information and Application Instructions



Application Instructions

Businesses seeking placement on a specific information panel must submit a Logo Signing Application to the Iowa DOT's Advertising Management Office.

Where to Get the Application:

- Iowa DOT area maintenance offices
- Iowa DOT Headquarters in Ames, Iowa
- www.iowadot.gov/iowaroadsigns

Application Process:

1. Submit the application along with a non-refundable \$100 fee.
2. If approved, send a proposed sign design to the DOT for approval.
3. Once the design is approved, supply the fabricated business signs meeting DOT specifications.
4. Applications denied by the DOT will receive written notification.

Important: Signs not meeting DOT specifications will be rejected. Contact the Advertising Management Office with questions before fabricating your sign.

Note: A separate application and fee are required for each type of service (e.g., GAS, FOOD, etc.) being requested.

How to Complete the Application

- **Lines 1–2:** Enter highway number and interchange location.
- **Lines 3–4:** Specify distance and direction from the exit ramp terminal to your business entrance.
- **Line 5:** Indicate whether your business or signage is visible from either ramp terminal.
- **Lines 6–10:** Under the appropriate service category, check all that apply.
- **Line 11:** Provide your valid state license number and issue date.
- **Line 12:** List days, hours, and months of operation. If seasonal, note closed dates or reduced hours.

Signature Required: Incomplete applications or unsigned certifications will not be processed.

BUSINESS SIGN BLANK SPECIFICATIONS			BUSINESS SIGN FACE SPECIFICATIONS		
MAINLINE	RAMP	TRAILBLAZER	MAINLINE	RAMP	TRAILBLAZER
<p>GAS SIGN</p>	<p>GAS SIGN</p>	<p>GAS SIGN</p>	<p>GAS SIGN - TYPICAL LOGO LAYOUT</p>	<p>GAS SIGN - TYPICAL LOGO LAYOUT</p>	<p>GAS SIGN - TYPICAL LOGO LAYOUT</p>
<p>FOOD, LODGING, CAMPING, OR ATTRACTION SIGN</p>	<p>FOOD, LODGING, CAMPING, OR ATTRACTION SIGN</p>	<p>GAS, FOOD, LODGING, CAMPING, OR ATTRACTION SIGN</p>	<p>FOOD, LODGING, CAMPING, ATTRACTION SIGN - TYPICAL TWO-LINE LEGEND LAYOUT</p>	<p>FOOD, LODGING, CAMPING, ATTRACTION SIGN - TYPICAL TWO-LINE LEGEND LAYOUT</p>	<p>FOOD, LODGING, CAMPING, ATTRACTION SIGN - TYPICAL TWO-LINE LEGEND LAYOUT</p>
<p>The sign blank shall be fabricated from flat sheet aluminum of between .074 inch minimum and .125 inch maximum thickness.</p> <p>The mounting holes are to be drilled with a No. 30 drill (.128 inch diameter) at the locations shown for individual signs.</p>			<p>FOOD, LODGING, CAMPING, OR ATTRACTION SIGN - TYPICAL LOGO LAYOUT</p>	<p>FOOD, LODGING, CAMPING, OR ATTRACTION SIGN - TYPICAL LOGO LAYOUT</p>	<p>FOOD, LODGING, CAMPING, OR ATTRACTION SIGN - TYPICAL LOGO LAYOUT</p>

Business Sign Specifications

Choose one layout only – legend or logo. Do not combine.

1. Legend Layout

- White text on blue background (3M 883N Blue or equivalent)
- Recommended text sizes:
 - Mainline: 10-inch letters
 - Ramp: 4-inch letters
 - Trailblazing: 3-inch letters
- 1–2 lines of text recommended (a 3rd line reduces legibility)
- No inset borders allowed

2. Logo Layout

- Use the business's well-known symbol or trademark
- Colors should match the customary use and resemble on-premise signage
- Background may be blue or the typical brand color
- Design may be modified slightly for better legibility
- Full logo area may be used up to the white border
- Inset borders are allowed only if they are standard for the brand

Design Standards (Applies to All Signs):

- Centered design (both vertically and horizontally)
- Retroreflective materials required
- White borders:
 - Mainline signs: 3/4 inch
 - Ramp and trailblazing signs: 1/2 inch
- Supplemental messages (e.g., "DIESEL", "OPEN 24 HOURS") allowed with prior written approval. Minimum letter height: 5 inches
- Trailblazing signs:
 - Text must be 3-inch letters
 - Logos may occupy full space up to the white border

Prohibited: Any designs resembling official traffic signs, signals, or warning devices.