

# PRIVATE SIGNING ADJACENT TO PROVINCIAL HIGHWAYS

## INTRODUCTION

Businesses and communities want to place signs along provincial highways advertising their goods and services. Balanced against these desires is a wish not to have a large number of signs which will be a distraction to the road user and deter from an aesthetically pleasing roadway. At the same time tourists should be made aware of the many excellent facilities and tourist attractions in our province. Safety considerations are also of prime importance.

Sign legislation has been in effect for over 50 years and is similar to other jurisdictions throughout North America. Saskatchewan's legislation and regulations do permit signing opportunities through signs on premise, rural identification signing, sign corridors and signing within communities.

Private signs should present clear, concise messages and in some way provide equal opportunities for all business and communities to present their messages. All signs must be maintained in a neat and professional manner.

The following are either selected portions taken directly from The Erection of Signs Adjacent to Provincial Highways Regulations, 1988 or interpretations of these Regulations. For a complete discussion of private signing adjacent to provincial highways see the Ministry's "Guide to Private Signing".

## GENERAL LIABILITIES

All associated costs or liabilities resulting from sign fabrication and placement are the responsibility of the sign owner.

## ADMINISTRATION

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure controls and either directly or indirectly administers all signs adjacent to provincial highways outside the incorporated limits of organized hamlets, villages, towns and cities as outlined in The Highways and Transportation Act, 1997 and associated regulations.

## **APPLICATION/PERMIT**

Most signs must be authorized by permit by the ministry or ministry designate.

## **OFF-PREMISE SIGN PERMIT CANCELLATION**

For all off-premise private signs governed by The Highways and Transportation Act (rural identification signs, signs in sign corridors and one time event signs) the minister or any authorized person may cancel a permit granted to install an off-premise sign at any time by giving the holder of the permit written notice of the cancellation personally or by registered or certified mail addressed to the last address of the holder of the permit that is known to the authorized person or the Ministry.

## **GENERAL SIGN PROHIBITIONS**

The following sign prohibitions apply to all private signs governed by The Highways and Transportation Act

- No person will install, place or otherwise locate within 400 metres of a provincial highway; outside the limits of a city, town, village or organized hamlet a private sign that:
  - (i) displays any intermittent, flashing or rotating light;  
  
(Flood lights, yard lights, area lighting or other lights that, in the opinion of the Ministry, are excessively distracting to the public or create a traffic hazard.
  - (ii) has any moving or rotating parts;  
  
(Movable message signs, moving or rotating parts, devices with flashing, blinking or turning lights.)
  - (iii) in any way resembles an official sign or a standard or commonly used traffic control device and that may cause motorist confusion;  
  
(Any sign that bears a legend giving a command such as "stop", "stop ahead", "turn", "caution", etc. or any legend that in any way imitates a standard commonly used traffic control device, an official traffic sign or other traffic-regulating device. The colours of red and yellow will be prohibited as background colours.)

- (v) is located within any sight triangle and, by itself, interferes with sight lines of any road intersection or at-grade railway crossing; or

The area which a sight line covers (for one corner of an intersection.) is triangular in shape and can be determined by measuring 230 metres along the centreline of the highway and 80 metres along the centreline of the intersecting roadway or railway crossing.

- (vi) is greater than 0.3 square metres in area for every metre that it is distant from the highway centreline.

The Alcohol Control Act restricts any advertising or reference by sign or billboard promoting alcoholic beverages. This includes any references to beverage rooms, "happy hours", liquor or beer company sign sponsors, their logos or products.

## GENERAL CONDITIONS

The following conditions apply to all private signs governed by The Highways and Transportation Act, 1997:

- A permit is deemed to be granted subject to the following terms and conditions:
  - (i) the holder of a permit will ensure that all signs installed under the permit are located off the right of way and do not encroach on the right of way of a provincial highway or a roadway maintained by the Ministry unless expressly permitted by the permit;  
  
(Installed outside of the normal highway right-of-way that in most cases includes at least the highway ditch up to the fence line.
  - (ii) the holder of a permit will ensure that all signs installed under the permit are maintained in an appearance that is, in the opinion of the minister or an authorized person, neat and professional;
  - (iii) no holder of a permit will install a sign under the permit that may, in the opinion of the minister or an authorized person, cause or create an unacceptable hazard or distraction to a driver on a public highway; and
  - (iv) the holder of a permit will ensure that all signs installed under the permit conform to all local municipal bylaws dealing with the erection and maintenance of signs.

## DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are contained in The Erection of Signs Adjacent to Provincial Highways Regulations, 1988.:

- advertising device

a device, other than a type of sign that is, in the opinion of the minister, standard, that is placed or affixed on land or on or to any object, structure or other thing that is on or affixed to land adjacent to a provincial highway and that advertises, attracts attention to or promotes publicity for an individual, business, organization, product or event and includes banners, bunting, streamers, strings of flags or multiple flag installations, lights, balloons, dirigibles, holograms and search lights and other devices that are decorative in nature;

- advertising sign

any sign intended to promote the sale of a specific product or the use or patronage of a specific business or activity;

- authorized person

an officer or employee of the department or any other person who is authorized by the minister to perform the duties of and exercise the powers of the minister pursuant to these regulations;

- commercial area

an area outside a city, town, village or organized hamlet which is subdivided to allow three or more business lots;

- identification sign

a sign that displays, with respect to land:

- (i) the name of the owner or occupier of the land or the business or activity carried out on the land;
- (ii) the type of business or activity carried out on the land;
- (iii) direction and distance from the provincial highway to the business or activity carried out on the land;
- (iv) the logo, slogan or telephone number of the business or activity carried out on the land; or
- (v) any combination of the items described in sub clauses (i) to (iv);

but does not include a billboard, notice, banner, bunting, streamer, string of flags or multiple flag installation, lights, including flashing lights, balloon, dirigible, hologram, search light, mechanized display, three-dimensional structure or art form;

(Note: It has become the practice of the Ministry to also allow hours of operation and open/closed information.)

- logo

a non-heraldic symbol used to identify a business or organization;

- minister

The member of the Executive Council to whom for the time being the administration of this Act is assigned;

- off-premise sign

a sign that is located separate and apart from the land on which the business or activity is located;

- on-premise sign

a sign that is located on the land on which the business or activity is located;

- permit

a valid and subsisting permit issued pursuant to subsection 75(1.2) of the Act;

- private sign

an on-premise or off-premise sign owned by a person or business;

- provincial road

any public highway that the Department of Highways and Transportation maintains;

- right-of-way

the property owned by Her Majesty in right of Saskatchewan for a provincial highway or a roadway maintained by the department;

- sight triangle

a triangular area located at the intersection of a provincial highway and any road or railway line formed by straight lines joining:

- (i) the point of centreline intersection of the provincial highway and the intersecting road or railway line;
- (ii) a point 230 metres from the point of centreline intersection, as measured along the highway centreline; and
- (iii) a point 80 metres from the point of centreline intersection, as measured along the centreline of the road or railway line;

- sign

a written mark, free standing structure or device that is not part of any building and that is used for the purpose of providing information or advertising to the public; and

- signing corridor

a designated strip of land that is parallel and adjacent to a provincial highway but outside the normal highway right-of-way, where private off-premise signs may be permitted to advertise goods and services that are available at a local business.

## **ON-PREMISE SIGNS**

The following discussion of on-premise signs is in addition to the sections described "Private Signing Adjacent to Provincial Highways".

### **DEFINITION**

On-premise sign means a sign that is located on the land on which the goods or services are being promoted by the sign.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

An enterprise or organization located outside the incorporated limits of any organized hamlet, village, town or city adjacent to a provincial highway may be eligible for an on-premise sign.

### **APPLICATIONS FOR ON-PREMISE SIGNS**

A person who wishes to install an on-premise sign which is greater than three square metres in area will apply to the Ministry on a form to be provided by the Ministry.

Where the Ministry receives an application, the minister or authorized Ministry official may grant or refuse to grant a permit to the applicant to install an on-premise sign.

### **LOCATION/SIGN SPECIFICATIONS**

The sign will promote the goods or services that are offered for sale or trade on the premises where the sign is located. On larger land holding, premises means the "home quarter".

## SUGGESTED SIGN DESIGN GUIDELINES AND INSTALLATION

### **GENERAL**

Communication experts often say that "the medium is the message". In this context, a sign will give a lasting impression of a business and community to the highway user. Often, people will gain this type of impression without remembering the sign message. The general appearance of the sign is as important as the sign message.

Those responsible for the planning, design, installation and maintenance of the sign should plan very carefully with attention to every detail. Every effort should be made to obtain an aesthetically pleasing sign which will be a positive reflection on the business or activity.

### **LEGIBILITY**

Motorists must be able to read private off-premise signs at a glance as they drive by, if the signs are to be of any value.

There are a number of variable factors that limit the legibility of a sign message:

- Message clarity

Motorists can only read and comprehend a very limited amount of information at highway speeds. Three or four lines of information with three or four words per line are the maximum that a normal motorist is able to read and comprehend while driving.

- Lettering

The size and style of lettering are the most important factors for legibility.

Letters should not be tightly compressed because their legibility is severely reduced.

Upper and lower case letters are acceptable and sometimes may improve legibility.

Script or highly stylised lettering types are very difficult to read and should be avoided as much as possible.

Simple Gothic or Helvetica style block lettering is the most commonly used lettering for highway signs. You can ask for samples of these lettering styles from printers or sign fabricators.



As a rule of thumb the size of lettering should be as large as practical. A 15 centimetre (six inch) high letter is the minimum effective size. Twenty to twenty five centimetre (8 to 10 inch) high lettering is most commonly used on highway signs.

The size of lettering on the same line should remain the same. Varying the size of lettering of different lines can be used to provide emphasis to the most important part of the sign message.

- Symbolic message

The use of symbols or symbolic signs can be advantageous because:

- legibility distance is increased
- perception time is improved
- illiterate or non-English speaking motorists can understand the message
- well-designed symbolic signs are easier to assimilate than the corresponding verbal form because less sign area is used

Sign messages have to be reduced to a very basic amount of information. Standard symbols should be used in order to convey as much information as possible.

- Visibility

The visibility of the sign at night can be important to an all night business. This can be accomplished by using retro-reflective materials similar to highway signs, or electrical illumination which would light the sign internally or externally.

If retro-reflective materials are chosen it is recommended that a high quality, "High Intensity" product be used. This will provide durability and ensure that enough light is returned to the motorist to read the sign.

Internal or external illumination should be carefully designed to ensure that there is no glare or undue distraction, since this may impair the night vision of the motorist. Illumination can be expensive, due to electrical power cable trenching costs.

The use of running or flashing electrical lights is strictly prohibited for reasons of safety and liability.

- Contrast

The use of high contrasting background and copy is important for legibility. Pastel colours have very poor contrast. Black and white have the most contrast. However there are many other suitable combinations of colours that work well together.

The use of a large number of colour combinations on one sign can reduce comprehension and create a poor impression if the sign appears gaudy.

## **DURABILITY**

The durability of the sign is very important to ensure long life and a minimum of maintenance. A variety of materials may be used to obtain a satisfactory sign that could last from between 5 to 10 years. The Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure uses high quality plastic sheeting on aluminium backing. While initial costs are fairly high, spread over the life of a sign it does become more economical to use the best materials possible.

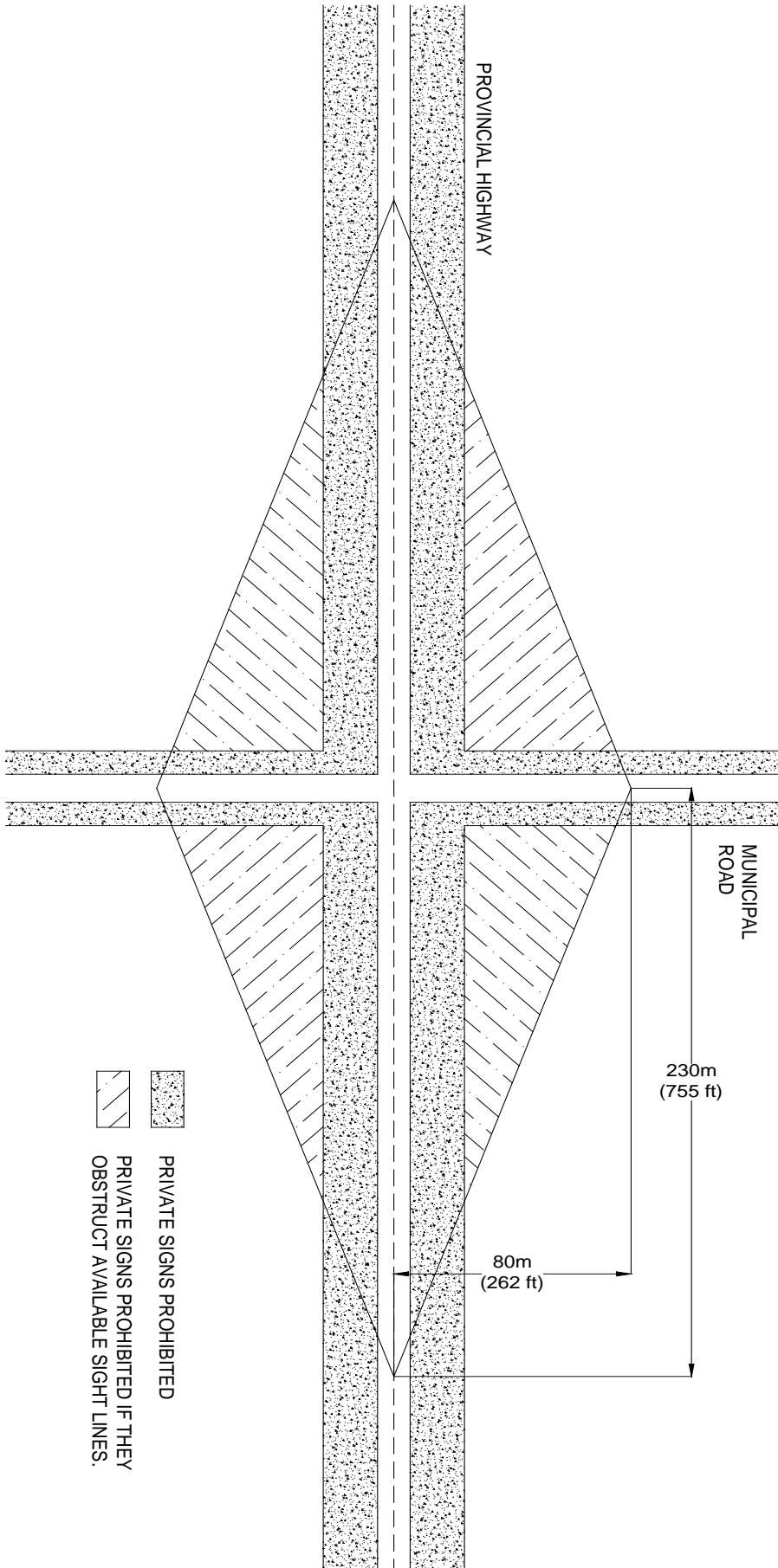
It is advised that you seek the services of a reputable private sign shop in your area.

## **SIGN POSTS**

The following will assist in the proper installation:

- 4" x 4" posts re most commonly used;
- the length should be long enough to ensure a proper mounting;
- the bottom of the sign should be at least 3 feet (1 metre) from the ground;
- the posts should be placed firmly in the ground to a depth of at least 3 feet (1 metre) for a 4' x 8' sign; and
- treatment with a preservative will increase the life of the post.

# SIGHT TRIANGLES





APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO  
INSTALL AN ON PREMISE SIGN

Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Enterprise)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Application to install \_\_\_\_\_ sign(s) within 400 metres of a Provincial Highway at the following locations:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Hwy.) (Parcel) (Qtr.) (Sect.) (Twp.) (Rge.) (W of) (Distance from centreline)

I/We certify that permission to install the sign has been obtained from the landowner(s).

Signature of Applicant

Date

NOTE: We suggest that a signed letter authorizing the sign installation be obtained from the land owner. This letter should be retained by applicant for future reference.

SKETCH OF LOCATION(S):

1. Distance from Highway centreline.
2. Distance from property lines (road allowance, blind line, ¼ line).
3. Direction that the sign faces.
4. Distance from any existing private sign.
5. Use an extra sheet or back of application if necessary.

**Applicants are reminded that signs must comply with all local by-laws.**

Submit completed application form to:

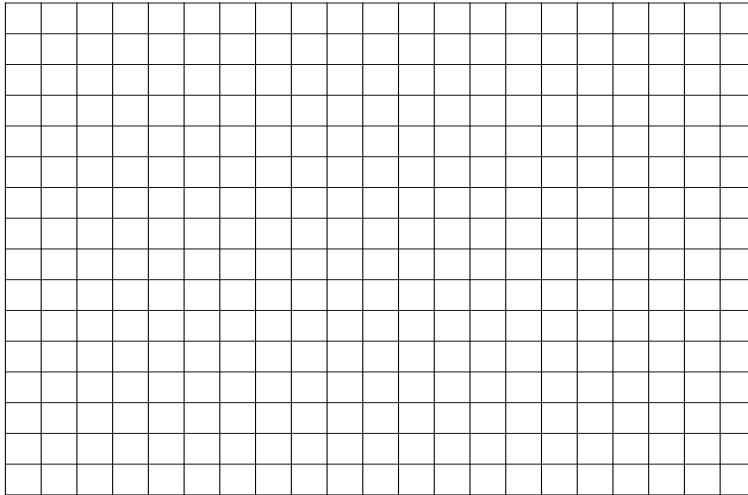
Fax: 306-933-8313

Mail: Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways & Infrastructure  
Bay #18-3603 Millar Ave  
Saskatoon, SK S7P 0B2

SIGN LAYOUT SHEET  
(Application)

Approximate facsimile of the proposed sign(s).

#1

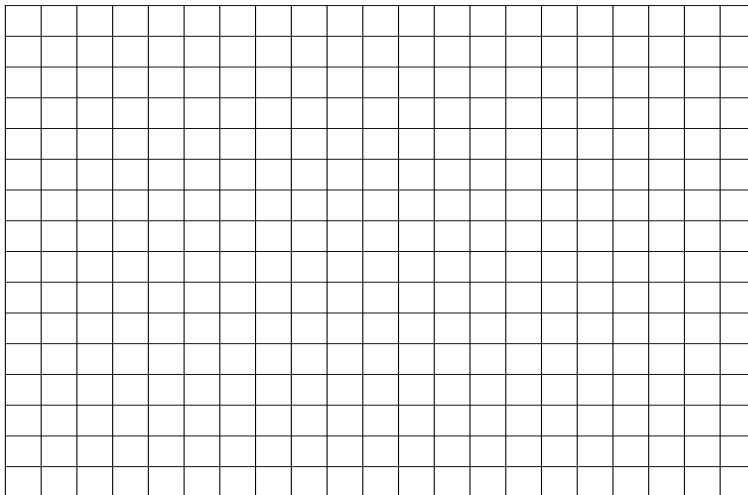


\_\_\_\_\_ meters  
( \_\_\_\_\_ feet )

Type of material \_\_\_\_\_  
Colour of Background \_\_\_\_\_  
Colour of Lettering \_\_\_\_\_  
Distance in Advance of Access \_\_\_\_\_  
Distance from Centre of Highway \_\_\_\_\_  
Illumination (Yes/No) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ meters ( \_\_\_\_\_ feet )

#2

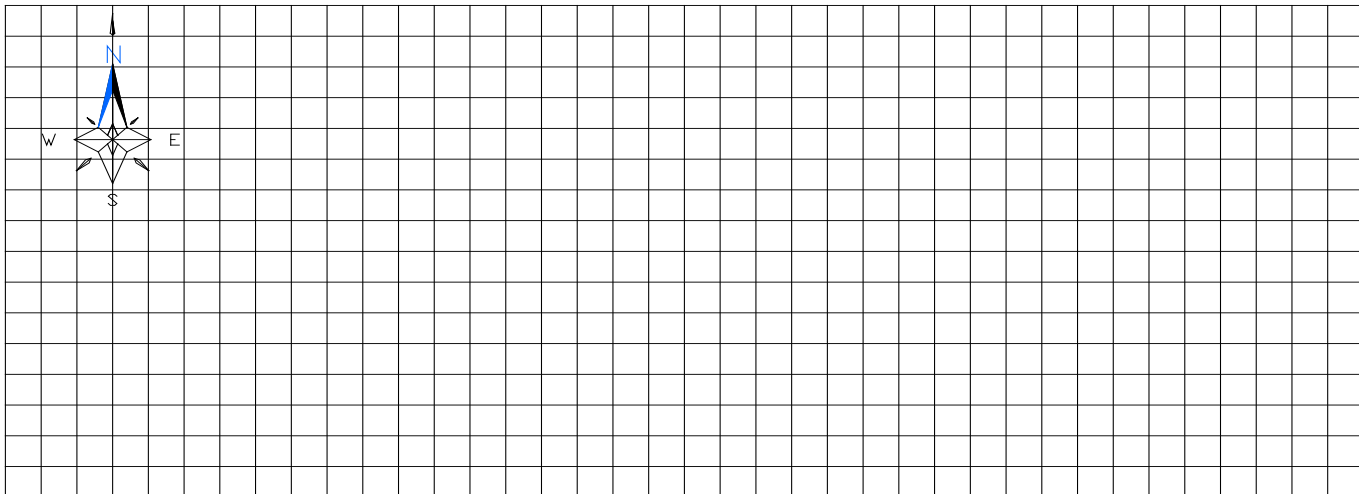


\_\_\_\_\_ meters  
( \_\_\_\_\_ feet )

Type of material \_\_\_\_\_  
Colour of Background \_\_\_\_\_  
Colour of Lettering \_\_\_\_\_  
Distance in Advance of Access \_\_\_\_\_  
Distance from Centre of Highway \_\_\_\_\_  
Illumination (Yes/No) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ meters ( \_\_\_\_\_ feet )

SKETCH OF SIGN LOCATION



Section:

SIGN ADMINISTRATION

Subject:

GENERAL CONDITIONS

Table 1320-20-1 Private Sign Spacing Requirements

Sign Area*		Minimum Lateral Distance** of Sign from Centreline		Minimum Distance*** of Sign from Other Permitted Signs	
Square Metres	Square Feet	Metres	Feet	Metres	Feet
3	32	22.0	72	36.0	118
4	43	22.0	72	48.0	157
5	54	22.0	72	60.0	197
6	65	22.0	72	72.0	236
7	75	23.3	76	84.0	276
8	86	26.7	88	96.0	315
9	97	30.0	98	108.0	354
10	108	33.3	109	120.0	394
11	118	36.7	120	132.0	433
12	129	40.0	131	144.0	472
13	140	43.3	142	150.0	492
14	151	46.7	153	150.0	492
15	161	50.0	164	150.0	492
16	172	53.3	175	150.0	492
17	183	56.7	186	150.0	492
18	194	60.0	197	150.0	492
19	205	63.3	208	150.0	492
20	215	66.7	219	150.0	492
21	226	70.0	230	150.0	492
22	237	73.3	240	150.0	492
23	248	76.7	252	150.0	492

\* Allowable sign surface areas range from a maximum of 23 m<sup>2</sup> to a minimum of 3 m<sup>2</sup>.

\*\* Signs can be no closer than 3.33 m from the highway centreline for every square metre of sign surface area. All signs must be located outside the provincial highway right-of-way.

\*\*\* The minimum distance between signs is 12 m for every square metre of area of the larger of the two signs, up to a maximum distance of 150 m for signs larger than 12.5 m<sup>2</sup>.