



Florida Department of Transportation

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POLICY

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Traffic Engineering & Operations
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DISPLAYING MESSAGES ON DYNAMIC MESSAGE SIGNS PERMANENTLY MOUNTED ON THE STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction for displaying messages on Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) permanently mounted on the State Highway System (SHS) in accordance with applicable state and federal laws.

DEFINITIONS:

DMS — Dynamic Message Sign(s); refers to dynamic, changeable or variable message signs defined as programmable traffic control devices that display messages composed of letters, symbols/graphics or both. DMS are used to convey timely and important en route and roadside information to motorists and travelers about changing highway conditions to improve operations and reduce crashes. DMS may inform drivers to change travel speed, change lanes, divert to a different route, or to be aware of a change in current or future traffic conditions.

Full-Matrix, Full-Color DMS – Refers to DMS (as described above) that have full-matrix and full-color display capabilities.

POLICY STATEMENT:

FDOT shall use DMS on the SHS to manage, control and divert traffic; provide current and anticipated roadway and environmental condition alerts; or regulate access to specific lanes or the entire roadway. All DMS messages shall conform to the currently adopted edition of the Federal Highway Administration's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and other applicable state and federal laws. If available, full-matrix, full-color DMS may be used to enhance the motorist's comprehension through approved and MUTCD-compliant symbols/graphics, pixel, and background colors.

The default message on DMS shall be travel time, if available. If travel times are not available, the DMS shall be left blank. Travel time messages shall be preempted with other messages as needed in the following priority order:

1. Traveler information related to conditions that require motorists to act or alter their driving, such as emergency events, including evacuations or closures required by FDOT, the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC), state and local law enforcement, the military, or the Department of Homeland Security.
2. Traveler information related to traffic incidents, hazardous and/or uncommon road conditions, work zone activities, or severe weather conditions.
3. Traveler information related to Florida Department of Law Enforcement alerts, such as America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) Alerts, Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) Alerts/BLUE, or Silver Alerts.
4. Traveler information related to special events impacting mobility and safety.

The use of DMS for the display of public information, advertisements, and non-essential messages is prohibited. However, public safety messages may be used if they assist FDOT in improving highway safety and reducing congestion or if the message is a supplement to a specific national or statewide highway safety media campaign (on the same topic).

Each public safety message shall not:

1. Be displayed during peak travel periods.
2. Exceed two weeks in total duration.
3. Exceed two hours per day (of the two-week period).

DMS public safety messages shall be approved by the Director, Traffic Engineering and Operations Office prior to displaying the message. A library of approved public safety messages is shown on the Traffic Engineering and Operations Office website (<http://www.fdot.gov/traffic/TrafficServices/DMS.shtm>).



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