

POSTING SIGNS ON OTHER STRUCTURES

by Patrick Wright, Traffic Engineer, Pennoni Associates

When a side of a street is cluttered with signs, trees, poles, utilities (*both above and below ground*), and other objects, it can be difficult to find the right place to install a new sign. A common question for municipalities trying to erect a sign among so much clutter is whether official traffic signs may be mounted on other structures already in place. Such structures might include utility poles, light poles, or traffic signal supports.

According to the federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), Section 2A.19, signs may

be mounted on other poles and structures, as long as the sign placement meets all of the placement criteria spelled out in the manual. In addition, the owner of the pole must grant permission for the sign to be placed on it.

The placement criteria, which can be found in PennDOT Publication 111 and the MUTCD, cover the mounting height, lateral offset, and longitudinal placement of the sign. In urban areas, the minimum height is 7 feet (*from the bottom of the sign to the top of the sidewalk*), and the minimum lateral offset is 2 feet from the face of the curb to the edge of the sign. (**Note:** *There is an exception to allow a 1-foot offset in constrained areas.*)

If the installation is along or near a sidewalk, be aware of sidewalk accessibility criteria under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This requires the sign to be at least 80 inches high and to not encroach in the pedestrian access route.

Outside of urban areas, where there are no sidewalks, pedestrians, or parked cars to contend with, the minimum sign height is 5 feet, and the minimum lateral offset is 2 feet.

The longitudinal placement is dependent on the type of sign and is described in the MUTCD for each sign.



May a sign be placed on a telephone pole? Yes, as long as the pole's owner grants permission and the sign meets state and federal placement criteria.



Cluttered streets can make sign placement challenging. Signs may be erected on existing poles as long as their placement meets all state and federal criteria, including mounting height, lateral offset, and longitudinal placement. The stop sign shown here does **not** meet the placement criteria.

Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), Section 2A.19:

Where permitted, signs may be placed on existing supports used for other purposes, such as highway traffic signal supports, highway lighting supports, and utility poles.

Standard:

08 If signs are placed on existing supports, they shall meet other placement criteria contained in this manual.



400 North Street, 6th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17120
1-800-FOR-LTAP • FAX (717) 783-9152
www.ltap.state.pa.us