



**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
VICTIMS MEMORIAL SIGN PROGRAM**

(Effective January 1, 2002)

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), upon request from an immediate family member of a person who was killed by a driver intoxicated with drugs or alcohol, will place and maintain a sign in memory of the victim.

BACKGROUND

Effective January 1, 2002, Streets and Highways Code Section 101.10 (Assembly Bill 965, Statutes of 2001) directs Caltrans to place and maintain memorial signs along state highways that read "Please Don't Drink and Drive" followed by: "In Memory of (deceased victim's name)." A state highway is any freeway, expressway, or conventional highway operated by the State of California.

GUIDELINES

Caltrans developed the following guidelines for placing victim memorial signs on state highways in accordance with the provisions of Streets and Highways Code Section 101.10.

I. Qualifications for a Memorial Sign

The following conditions must be satisfied to qualify for a memorial sign on a state highway:

A) At least one of the deceased victim's immediate family members requests a memorial sign. An immediate family member is a spouse, child, stepchild, brother, stepbrother, sister, stepsister, mother, stepmother, father or stepfather.

B) The accident occurred on or after January 1, 1991.

C) Either (1) or (2) is true:

(1) The intoxicated driver was convicted of second degree murder, or gross vehicular manslaughter, or vehicular manslaughter.

(2) The intoxicated driver died or could not be prosecuted because of mental incompetence.

Note: An intoxicated driver who died does NOT qualify as a victim.

II. Installation of Memorial Signs on State Highways

The following are requirements for placing memorial signs on state highways:

A) Signs will be installed in accordance with applicable Caltrans policies and standards for signs. This includes posts, hardware, materials, vertical, longitudinal, and lateral positioning.

B) Caltrans will NOT install or maintain a memorial sign if there is written opposition from any immediate family member.

C) Only one sign will be installed in one direction of travel on the right side of the state highway in close proximity to where the accident occurred at a location where it is safe and practical to do so.

D) Caltrans will maintain the sign for 7 years or until the condition of the sign has deteriorated to a point where it is no longer serviceable, whichever occurs first.

E) Only one sign will be installed per accident. Multiple victim names may appear on the sign.

F) A sign will NOT be installed in the median of any state highway.

III. How to Apply

To request a memorial sign please submit items noted in A through D below to the local District Office of Caltrans responsible for the area where the accident occurred. Mailing addresses of each District Office and their Counties are listed on page 4 of this document.

Once approved, the applicant must pay a fee of \$1,000 to the local District Office to cover the cost of administration, installation and maintenance of the memorial sign.

A) An immediate family member of the deceased victim must write to the local Caltrans District Office requesting a memorial sign. Any person may also request a sign if that person also submits written consent from an immediate family member.

EXAMPLE of a written request

[Date]

Dear District Director,

I [Jane Doe] am requesting and give my consent that a sign be placed on the state highway memorializing my brother [John Doe] in accordance with Caltrans' Victims Memorial Sign Program.

Signed,

[Jane Doe's signature]

[Return Address and Contact Telephone Number]

[E-mail address if available]

B) The applicant must provide a copy of the accident report to the local Caltrans District Office (This is needed to verify the date and location of the accident). Other equally reliable sources for this information supplied by the applicant will be considered.

C) The applicant must provide proof of conviction to the local Caltrans District Office from court records, or proof of intoxication from coroner's records if the driver died. Other equally reliable sources for this information supplied by the applicant will be considered.

D) The applicant must provide the exact spelling of the deceased victim's name as it is to appear on the memorial sign.

Frequently Asked Questions

1) How do I apply for a sign?

By submitting a written request and official documentation to the local Caltrans district office where the accident occurred. Detailed application guidelines are available on the Caltrans web-site or by regular mail upon request.

2) What is official documentation?

Police accident reports are needed to verify the date and location of the accident. Court records are needed to verify conviction for second degree murder, or gross vehicular manslaughter, or vehicular manslaughter. Coroner's records are needed only if the driver died and was not prosecuted to verify the presence of drugs or alcohol.

3) What happens if I cannot obtain accident reports, coroner's or court records?

If incomplete documentation is provided with the request and Caltrans is unable to verify the accident or conviction the sign will NOT be installed. However, other equally reliable sources for this information will be considered, but must be provided by the applicant.

4) How is the sign cost determined?

Typically, here is what the fee covers: Verifying the request, receiving and depositing funds, ordering the sign, determining the exact location of the sign in the field, and conducting an underground utility investigation before drilling the posthole. The sign is fabricated from two sheets of aluminum (36" x 30" and 36" x 12"), which are both mounted on a single wooden post. Once the sign, post and hardware are received, specially equipped crews drive to the location and establish a work zone. The work zone involves setting up temporary construction signs and cones to separate workers from traffic. The posthole is drilled and the sign is installed. Maintenance crews maintain the sign for seven years and replace the sign if it gets knocked down, vandalized or stolen.

5) Can someone other than an immediate family member apply for a memorial sign?

Any person may request a sign if that person also submits written consent from an immediate family member.

6) What happens if another immediate family member objects to the sign?

If the objection is in writing, the sign will NOT be installed or if it has already been installed it will be removed. There is no additional charge for removal. There will be no refund of the original fee once the sign has been installed.

7) Can family, friends, or the general public be present during installation?

Normally, only qualified personnel are allowed in work zones.

8) Can family, friends, or the general public pull over to view the sign or get out of their vehicles?

Motorists cannot park at locations where highway signs explicitly prohibit parking. Otherwise, parked vehicles cannot block the normal flow of traffic or be left standing alongside the highway for extended periods. In the interest of public safety, Caltrans does NOT encourage motorists to park alongside state highways or get out of their vehicles. It is Caltrans' practice to remove wreaths, crosses, flowers, etc. within the state highway right-of-way to prevent these from being motorist distractions.

9) Can a sign be installed on a private, city or county road?

The law specifies installation on state highways. If the accident did not occur on a state highway you may want to contact the appropriate agency that has jurisdiction of the road. Caltrans will only install signs on state highways. State highways are easily identifiable on commercially available road maps of California by distinctive route shields: Interstate (red, white, and blue), State Highway (green and white), or U.S. Highway (black and white).

10) How long will it take to have a sign installed?

It could take up to 90 days. Once the local District office has received all of the required documentation the approval may take 30 days for verification and field investigation. Once approved and the fee is received, it may take another 60 days for ordering, fabrication, delivery and installation of the sign.

11) What happens if the sign gets vandalized, stolen or knocked down?

The initial fee covers the cost of replacing the sign one time.

Caltrans Local District Offices

Mail your request to the local office that corresponds to the County the accident occurred in, and mark your envelope "ATTN: District Director".

Districts and their Counties	Mailing Address & Phone Numbers
District 1: Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, and Mendocino County	P.O. Box 3700 Eureka, CA 95502 Phone: (707) 445-6600
District 2: Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, and Trinity County	1657 Riverside Dr. Redding, CA 96001 Phone: (530) 225-3426
District 3: Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Glenn, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sierra, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba County	P.O. Box 911 Marysville, CA 95901 Phone: (530) 741-4211
District 4: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma County	P.O. Box 23660 Oakland, CA 94623-0660 Phone: (510) 286-4444
District 5: Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Cruz County	50 Higuera Street San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-5415 Phone: (805) 549-3111
District 6: Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, and Tulare County	P.O. Box 12616 Fresno, CA 93728-2616 Phone: (559) 488-4020
District 7: Los Angeles and Ventura County	100 South Main Street, Suite 100 Los Angeles, CA 90012 Phone: (213) 897-3656
District 8: Riverside and San Bernardino County	464 W. 4th St. San Bernardino, CA 92401 Phone: (909) 383-4561
District 9: Inyo and Mono County	500 South Main Street Bishop, CA 93514 Phone: (760) 872-0601
District 10: Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Mariposa, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Tuolumne County	P.O. Box 2048 Stockton, CA 95201 Phone: (209) 948-7543
District 11: Imperial and San Diego County	P.O. Box 85406 San Diego, CA 92186-5406 Phone: (619) 688-6785
District 12: Orange County	3337 Michelson Dr., Ste 380 Irvine, CA 92612-8894 Phone: (949) 724-2000

The information contained in this document can also be viewed at the following internet address:
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/signtech/signdel/dui/victims.htm>