



Agency of Transportation

219 N. Main Street, Barre, VT 05641

vtrans.vermont.gov

Ms. Sarah Copeland Hanzas

Secretary of State

128 State Street

Montpelier, VT 05633

August 24, 2026

Re: Vermont Sign Law and Political Signs

Dear Secretary Copeland Hanzas:

As the general election season draws near, I believe candidates campaigning for public office would benefit from a refresher on Vermont's Sign Law and how they can stay in compliance with the provisions of the law.

Vermont regulates activities in the highway rights-of-way through the following statutes: 10 V.S.A § 495(d); 10 V.S.A § 503, 19 V.S.A § 1111(a); 23 V.S.A § 1027, and the Code of Federal Regulations, 23 C.F.R. § 1.23.

Essentially, Vermont prohibits all types of signs within the limits of highway rights-of-way other than official traffic control signs. The minimum right-of-way for most Vermont highways is 49.5 feet wide; thus, the right-of-way extends, at a minimum, 24.75 feet from either side of the centerline. In some cases, the right-of-way is wider, as evidenced by boundary monuments, fences, utility installations, ditches, etc. To be in compliance with the law, candidates running for political office should ensure their signs are placed beyond 25 feet from the centerline, or farther where there is evidence of a wider right-of-way.

Vermont statutes require the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) to enforce the sign law along State highways. VTrans accomplishes this through our hardworking district personnel who have many other duties to maintain our transportation system. VTrans often receives complaints from citizens about these temporary signs within State highway rights-of-way. Sometimes these signs become a safety issue as they are a distraction for motorists or interfere with sight distance at intersections and driveways.



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In addition to prohibiting signs in highway rights-of-way, state statutes also prohibit posting any kind of sign or notice on utility poles, regardless of whether the pole is within the highway right-of-way or on private property.

VTrans and the employees who are required to enforce the law would appreciate your forwarding my letter and attached materials to candidates running for political office this fall.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,



Joe Flynn
Secretary of Transportation

Attachment



10 V.S.A. § 495. Other regulations applying to permitted signs.

(d) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this title, a person, firm or corporation shall not erect or maintain any outdoor advertising structure, device or display within the limits of the highway right-of-way; however, this limitation shall not apply to the signs and devices referred to in subdivisions 494(1), (2), (3), (6), (7), (10), (14) and (17) of this title.

10 V.S.A. § 503. Penalty

A person who violates this chapter shall be assessed a civil penalty of not more than \$50.00. Each day the violation continues shall be a separate offense.

23 V.S.A. § 1027. Unauthorized signs, signals or markings

(a) No person shall place, maintain, or display upon or in view of any highway any unauthorized sign, signal, marking, or device which is an imitation of or resembles an official traffic-control device or railroad sign or signal, or which attempts to direct the movement of traffic, or which obscures or interferes with the effectiveness of an official traffic-control device or any railroad sign or signal.

(b) No person shall place or maintain upon any highway, nor may any public authority permit upon any highway, any traffic sign or signal bearing thereon any commercial advertising, except as otherwise provided in 10 V.S.A. chapter 21.

(c) This section shall not be deemed to prohibit the erection upon private property adjacent to highways of signs giving useful directional information and of a type that cannot be mistaken for official signs, nor shall this provision affect any right or obligation created or recognized under 10 V.S.A. chapter 21.

(d) Every prohibited sign, signal, or marking is a public nuisance, and the Agency of Transportation may remove it or cause it to be removed without notice.

23 V.S.A. § 2302. Traffic violation defined

(c) A violation of a traffic law in this title for which no penalty is otherwise provided shall be subject to a penalty of not more than \$1,000.00.

23 C.F.R. § 1.23 Rights-of-way

(a) Interest to be acquired. The State shall acquire rights-of-way of such nature and extent as are adequate for the construction, operation and maintenance of



a project.

(b) Use for highway purposes. Except as provided under paragraph (c) of this section, all real property, including air space, within the right-of-way boundaries of a project shall be devoted exclusively to public highway purposes. No project shall be accepted as complete until this requirement has been satisfied. The State highway department shall be responsible for preserving such right-of-way free of all public and private installations, facilities or encroachments, except (1) those approved under paragraph (c) of this section; (2) those which the Administrator approves as constituting a part of a highway or as necessary for its operation, use or maintenance for public highway purposes and (3) informational sites established and maintained in accordance with § 1.35 of the regulations in this part.

(c) Other use or occupancy. Subject to 23 U.S.C. 111, the temporary or permanent occupancy or use of right-of-way, including air space, for nonhighway purposes and the reservation of subsurface mineral rights within the boundaries of the rights-of-way of Federal-aid highways, may be approved by the Administrator, if he determines that such occupancy, use or reservation is in the public interest and will not impair the highway or interfere with the free and safe flow of traffic thereon.

§ 301. Posting utility poles

A person who paints or posts a sign, advertisement, or notice on a telegraph, telephone, or electric light pole shall be fined \$5.00 for each offense.

