



State of Maryland Tourist Attractions Sign Program Policy

Information Package and Application



*Revised 1/2012
Revised 1/2015*

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The Attractions Sign program was developed as a cooperative effort among public agencies and the private tourism entities that are committed to attracting and hosting visitors in Maryland. *In addition to directing Maryland's visitors to attractions, the program was developed to ensure the safety of the traveling public, maintain the scenic beauty of the state's communities and roadways and ensure efficient traffic flow. The program is the result of extensive studies, analyses and prototypes—all designed to determine the most appropriate system for directing visitors to attractions throughout the state.

The Attractions Sign Program is administered by the State Highway Administration in cooperation with the Maryland Tourism Development Board. The program and the signs included in it are subject to all Federal, State, County and City/Town regulations.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Visitors to Maryland enjoy its historic sites, its natural beauty and recreational facilities, its unique museums and entertainment venues. While Maryland has many sign programs to guide both visitors and residents along its highways, they sometimes need additional assistance locating specific attractions. The Maryland Tourist Attractions Sign Program is intended to create a predictable and recognizable system to help travelers locate places of interest that will make their experience in Maryland more enjoyable. The focus of the Attractions Sign Program is the development and installation of informative, clear and uniform signs along the state's Interstate highways and other limited access highways. These Attractions Signs will guide drivers to the closest exit for historic, cultural and recreational attractions throughout the state. Each Attractions Sign will include up to six logo panels highlighting specific attractions, or the areas where attractions are located. After exiting an Interstate, Trailblazer Signs along the exit ramps provide directional arrows and mileage indicators to specific attractions or areas. The Attractions Sign Program complements other existing directional signs, including Destination Signs, Specific Services Signs, and Maryland Historical Markers and History Signs.

ATTRACTIONS SIGN

Purpose: Attractions Signs are designed to inform unfamiliar highway travelers of nearby points of interest, and to direct them to the appropriate highway exit.

Location: These signs are placed at the closest exit to the attraction on Interstate highways and limited access highways, as allowed by law.

Design: Attractions Sign will include the uniform Maryland tourism logo and an individual logo panel for up to six attractions. The background of the sign will be blue.

The design of each logo panel must be reviewed and approved by the State Highway Administration once an application is approved.

**(Please refer "Glossary of Signage-Related Terms" on pg. 5 for list of participating agencies)*

Criteria: In order to be included on an Attractions Sign, an attraction must meet all of the criteria developed by the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, the Maryland Department of Transportation, and the Maryland Tourism Council. As stated in the “Glossary of Signage-Related Terms” listed in this brochure, the definition of an “Attraction” is as follows: “Businesses, facilities or sites whose primary purpose is satisfying the needs of visitors from outside the immediate area for outdoor recreational, educational, scientific, environmental, natural, cultural, heritage/historical, or entertainment related activities. (Visitors from outside the immediate area are defined as those traveling 50 miles or more from their place of residence.) Attractions may also include a group of sites with common significance, such as an Antique District or Historic District.” Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Meet definition of an “attraction” as stated throughout this brochure;
- Open *at least* eight months annually;
- Open to the general public *at least* five days a week, including Saturday and/or Sunday;
- Open to the general public at least six hours per day. Public activities must be available during hours of operation.
- Provide parking within walking distance of the attraction;
- Provide public access to restrooms, drinking water and telephone for emergency uses;
- Provide a professionally printed brochure. Information in the brochure must include a description of the attraction and the days and hours of operation. (Note: hours of operation on brochure must match hours of operation on application form. Brochure must be professionally printed - photocopies are not acceptable;
- Provide annual visitor attendance on application;
- Meet all Americans with Disabilities (ADA) requirements for accessibility.

Priority: Priority for inclusion on an Attractions Sign is given to those attractions located within five miles of an exit. If space on the sign allows, then those attractions located within ten miles of the exit will be included, and then those located within 15 miles of the exit. These exceptions to the five-mile distance requirement will be made, on an individual basis, by the Tourist Attractions Sign Evaluation Committee.

Restrictions: A maximum of six individual attraction logo panels may be included on the sign. Each qualifying interchange may have an Attractions Sign along each direction of travel, of only one freeway, at one interchange, if law and space permit. If space does not permit, an attraction may be limited to only one sign, in one direction of travel, on one interchange. In these cases, the annual fee will be approximately half of the full fee.

Fee/Cost: The annual fee to have a logo panel placed on an Attractions Sign is comparable to the current motorist-specific services logo program. The fee may vary and will be determined annually by the State Highway Administration.

The annual fee to participate is estimated at \$525 to \$1,000 each year. This fee includes the installation of two logo sign panels—one logo panel on an Attractions Sign in each direction of travel. The annual fee also includes recognition on nearby Trailblazing Signs and regular maintenance of all signs.

Fabrication: Production of the Attractions Sign logo panel is the responsibility of the participating attraction. The logo panel design must meet the size, color, reflectivity and material guidelines provided by the State Highway Administration. SHA will provide a list of suggested vendors for panel fabrication.

Installation: SHA will affix and install the participating attraction’s logo sign panel. SHA is responsible for maintaining the background sign panel only. The cost of this service is included in the annual fee. **Please Note: It is the responsibility of the participating attraction to replace their logo panel in the event of damage.**

Dates: A revised fee for participating in the Attractions Sign Program will be established before July 1 of each year. The annual fee period will begin on the date that a logo panel is installed on an Attractions Sign. Attraction will be notified by SHA when their attraction sign has been installed.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

To be considered for inclusion on an Attractions Sign panel, potential sign participants should make sure that they meet all of the criteria outlined in this brochure before completing the attached application. Only applications from attractions that meet all the criteria will be considered. The Tourist Attractions Sign Evaluation Committee will review all applications and will determine attraction eligibility. The Evaluation Committee reserves the right to verify all information provided to ensure criteria has been met for an attraction sign. Any changes to the application process and program will be reviewed and take effect on July 1 of each year. **The State of Maryland reserves the right to modify and enhance the Attractions Sign program and its criteria. If, during the life of this program, any Acts are passed or Regulations adopted which affect the rights herein granted, the said Acts and Regulations shall be applicable to this program from the date on which they come into force.**

After a completed application and a printed brochure has been submitted and reviewed, applicants will be notified by mail if their application has been approved or denied.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information on the Attractions Sign Program, contact:

Attractions Sign Program
Maryland Office of Tourism Development
World Trade Center Baltimore
401 E. Pratt Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
Phone: 1-877-209-5883
Fax: 410-333-6643
mdsigns@mdwelcome.org

For information on state highway signing policies and guidelines, and for information on sign fabrication and installation, please contact:

State Highway Administration
Office of Traffic and Safety
7491 Connelley Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076
Phone: 1-800-323-6742
Fax: 410-553-6399
signs@sha.md.state.us

To be considered for a logo panel on an Attractions Sign, please **detach and complete both sides of the application (on last page of this booklet)**. Mail the completed application, along with the required original, printed brochure describing your attraction to:

MARYLAND TOURIST ATTRACTIONS SIGN PROGRAM
Maryland Office of Tourism Development
World Trade Center Baltimore
401 E. Pratt Street
Suite 1433
Baltimore MD 21202

Glossary of Signage-Related Terms

Annual Fee: Yearly cost for participation in the Attractions Sign Program.

Attraction: Businesses, facilities or sites whose primary purpose is satisfying the needs of visitors from outside the immediate area for outdoor recreational, educational, scientific, environmental, natural, cultural, heritage/historical, or entertainment related activities. (Visitors from outside the immediate area are defined as those traveling 50 miles or more from their place of residence.) Attractions may also include a group of sites with common significance, such as an Antique District or Historic District.

Attraction Sign: A sign located along an Interstate highway or limited access highway in advance of an interchange/exit that displays up to six attraction logo panels.

Attraction Logo Panel: The actual attraction logo sign panel produced by a participating attraction that is provided to SHA for installation on an Attraction Sign.

Eligible Attraction: An attraction that meets all the criteria as defined by the program and described in this brochure.

Fiscal Year: July 1 through June 30.

Freeway: A divided highway with full control of access limited to exit and entrance ramps at grade separated interchanges.

Interchange: A system of interconnecting roadways in conjunction with one or more grade separation bridges that provide for the movement of traffic between two or more roadways or highways on different levels.

Interstate Highway: A federally designated freeway that is part of the Interstate and Defense Highway System. Examples include I-83, I-70, I-68, I-95, I-695, I-495, I-270.

Limited Access Highway: A freeway, other than an Interstate (a few examples of “Limited Access Highways” include: MD 100, parts of US 50, and Jones Falls Expressway).

Logo Panel/Logo Sign: See Attraction Logo Panel.

Participating Agencies:

Maryland Office of Tourism Development (OTD): The organization responsible for marketing and developing Maryland’s tourism products. OTD is a unit of the Division of Tourism, Film and the Arts within the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development (DBED).

Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA): The organization responsible for the construction and maintenance of Maryland’s highways and highway signs. SHA is a unit of the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT).

Maryland Tourism Council (MTC): The independent, non-profit trade association representing the entire Maryland tourism industry.

Maryland Tourism Development Board: The governing body for the Office of Tourism Development responsible for guiding the direction of activities necessary to develop and market the State as a destination. MTDB is composed of hospitality industry executives appointed by the Governor and the General Assembly.

Tourist Attractions Sign Evaluation Committee: (mostly comprised of representatives from the participating agencies noted above)

Sign Panel: See Attraction Logo Panel.

Trailblazing Sign: A sign installed on a road leading away from an interchange or intersection that provides distances and direction to eligible attractions not visible from the road.

This information was produced by the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development in cooperation with The Maryland Department of Transportation and the Maryland Tourism Council.

REQUIREMENTS

DISTANCE FROM MAJOR HIGHWAY: _____

DAYS/HOURS OPEN: (i.e.: Monday 9:00 am – 4:00 pm) (*Note: Hrs. of operation on attraction brochure must match hrs. of operation listed below.*)

Sunday: _____ Monday: _____

Tuesday: _____ Wednesday: _____

Thursday: _____ Friday: _____ Saturday: _____

SEASONAL - LIST MONTHS CLOSED: _____ (*May not exceed 4 months*)

YEARLY VISITOR COUNT: _____

Please circle either “yes” or “no” for all items listed below:

Open at least 8 months annually	yes	no
Open to public at least 5 days/wk. including Sat. and/or Sun.	yes	no
Open to public at least 6 hrs/day—all activities available during hours of operation	yes	no
Parking available within short walking distance of attraction	yes	no
Public Restrooms/drinking water access	yes	no
Telephone available in case of emergency	yes	no
Meets requirements of Americans with Disabilities Act	yes	no
Annual Visitor Count provided above	yes	no
Brochure (enclosed) <u>stating hours/days of operation</u> and attraction description	yes	no

IMPORTANT NOTE: In order for your application to be approved for participation in this program, **all criteria listed on page 2** of the information package **must be met**. If all criteria are not met, your application will be denied.

All applications will be reviewed and verified by the Tourist Attractions Sign Evaluation Committee and approved by the Maryland Tourism Development Board and State Highway Administration. The Attractions Sign Program is subject to all Federal, State, County and City/Town regulations. If, during the life of this program, any Acts are passed or Regulations adopted which affect the rights herein granted, the said Acts and Regulations shall be applicable to this program from the date on which they come into force.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Once sign installation is complete, prior to renewal each year, attraction must provide documentation detailing the information from previous year covering annual period October 1 to September 30. Documentation must also demonstrate that the *majority* of visitors reside outside a 50 mile radius of attraction.

- (1) Total number of visitors
- (2) Total number of visitors who reside outside 50 mile radius of attraction
- (3) Visitor’s top five states of origin

Submission of this information does not constitute automatic renewal. Additional information may be required. Due to program enhancements, the State of Maryland reserves the right to modify this program, which may result in removal of an existing Attraction Sign previously installed under the MD Attractions Sign Program.

CERTIFICATION

I CERTIFY THAT I HAVE READ THE ATTACHED “TOURIST ATTRACTIONS SIGN POLICY” AND AGREE TO ITS TERMS AND CONDITIONS. I CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE TRUE AND CORRECT AND THAT I WILL INFORM THE OFFICE OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OF ANY CHANGES TO THE ABOVE INFORMATION THAT MAY AFFECT THE AVAILABILITY OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED.

SIGNED: (APPLICANT)

DATE

**NOTICE: FALSIFICATION OF THE ABOVE STATEMENTS WILL RESULT IN THE DENIAL OR REVOCATION OF THIS APPLICATION.*

Revised 1/2012
Revised 5/2013
Revised 1/2015
Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development
Maryland Department of Transportation
Maryland Tourism Council

