



From mountain to sea

Unauthorised signs in verges and obstructions on footpaths and footways

Guidance

March 2022



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1 Introduction

This guidance note contains Aberdeenshire Council's policy for

- a. Unauthorised signs placed in roadside verges in rural areas; and
- b. Obstructions placed on footpaths and footways in urban areas.

1.1 Unauthorised signs

It is in everyone's interest not to have unauthorised signs. Apart from being unsightly, unauthorised signs can be dangerous as they can cause drivers to be distracted and visibility can be obstructed. They are also illegal in terms with the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984. Aberdeenshire Council's policy to allow certain signs to be erected in controlled circumstances will help the public and ensure fairness of treatment to all businesses and communities in Aberdeenshire.

1.2 Obstructions on Footpaths and Footways

Aberdeenshire Council's policy is a development of the guidelines introduced by Grampian Regional Council. These guidelines have been extensively reviewed in light of situations which have arisen in towns in Aberdeenshire and following discussions with local disability action groups



Obstructions can include Displays of Goods for Sale, Advertising Material, Wheeled Bins and Rubbish Bags.

Signs placed on footways within town centres particularly conservation areas may require planning permission. Further advice can be obtained from Aberdeenshire Council's Planning and Environment Service.

2 Policy on unauthorised signs placed in roadside verges

Commercial signs **will not** be permitted on public road verges.

Signs highlighting community events will be allowed subject to the guidelines laid down in this leaflet.

Aberdeenshire Council already has a policy for providing directional signs for housing developments.

Whilst Aberdeenshire Council appreciates the genuine reasons for people erecting signs such as "Cattle Crossing" or "Beware of Lambs" or "Please Slow Down Children at Play" these are unofficial signs and will be removed as unauthorised.

If unauthorised signs are found in a road verge the following procedure will occur:

- Signs will be removed immediately and those responsible contacted and given 14 days to collect them. If left unclaimed after a further 14 days they shall be destroyed.
- If there is no contact name or number and no one comes forward to collect them the signs shall be stored for 28 days before they are destroyed.

3 Guidelines for authorised signs for community events

Aberdeenshire Council will have the final determination of what is a community event but typical examples would be a gala day, a local theatre putting on a play, a church event. If in doubt please consult the offices given in this leaflet.

Signs will be allowed only on the nearest main road.

No signs will be allowed on trunk roads i.e. A90 and the A96.

- No signs will be allowed 100 metres prior to a junction or in the first 50 metres after exiting a junction.
- Signs should be a maximum size of A3 with a minimum letter size of 50 mm (2 inches).
- The maximum height of the sign shall be 750mm above the verge and the edge of the sign shall be 600mm from the edge of the carriageway.
- A maximum of 3 signs to be erected at any location.
- Signs to be erected no more than 7 days prior to an event and taken down no more than 3 days after the event.
- Signs should not attempt to copy recognised traffic signs.
- Signs are not to be fixed to lighting columns or traffic signs.
- Notwithstanding the above guidelines Aberdeenshire Council shall have the authority to remove any signs under any circumstances at any time if it is felt that the signs are unsuitable or dangerous.

If the above conditions are not met the signs shall be regarded as unauthorised signs and the procedure for unauthorised signs will be applied.

Putting signs up near roads can be dangerous. We would recommend you contact Aberdeenshire Council Roads & Infrastructure Service who will be pleased to give advice on the safest way to erect signs.

4 Guidelines for obstructions on footpaths and footways

All objects such as sandwich boards and signs shall

- be positioned at the rear of the footway
- present no hazard to pedestrians or wheelchair users (e.g. sharp edges, protruding nails or moving/rotating signs which could injure children)
- be no more than 0.5 metre wide
- be securely fixed or sufficiently stable so as not to be easily moved or blown over
- be removed when premises are closed
- not reduce visibility for road users at a junction, access or bend
- not obscure any road signs
- not be fixed to street furniture

In all cases the remaining available footway width must be at least 1.5 metres except where pedestrians are separated from adjacent moving traffic by a pedestrian barrier or layby in which case the footway may be reduced to 1.2 metres.

Only one object will be permitted for each shop or premises, and it must be located within the frontage of the shop.

All obstructions which do not meet the above guidelines will be treated as unauthorised signs and the owner of the sign shall be verbally requested to remove it. If this is not done within 24 hours then the obstruction will be removed and thereafter the procedure will be dealt with as the procedure for unauthorised signs.



5 Further information

Should you require any information on any aspect of the guidelines for unauthorised signs and obstructions the appropriate Roads officer can be contacted using our roads enquiries telephone number (**03456 08 12 05**) or through the email addresses given below in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Local Roads office contact details

Area	email
Banff & Buchan	banffandbuchan.roads@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
Buchan	buchan.roads@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
Formartine	formartine.roads@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
Garioch	garioch.roads@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
Kincardine & Mearns	kincardineandmearns.roads@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
Marr	marr.roads@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

