

PRESS RELEASE

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East central Georgia...

Don't place signs or other objects on the state's right of way

TENNILLE— Georgia Department of Transportation area offices within east central Georgia remind citizens that placing any sign or other object in the state's right of way is illegal.

The Department is seeing a high number of campaign signs on state rights of way this election season. Signs on the state highway system – interstates and state routes – must be approved and permitted.

It's not unusual for Georgia DOT maintenance employees to uproot several hundred signs during an election year, said Damon Frost, assistant area engineer for maintenance in Madison.

"We take them back to our headquarters and give the owners an opportunity to reclaim them," he said. "Signs are kept at the headquarters for 30 days before they are thrown away."

Georgia Code 32-6-51 states that "it shall be unlawful for any person to erect, place or maintain within the right of way of any public road any sign, signal or other device except as authorized by subsection (d) of this Code section." Violation is a misdemeanor and is punishable by a fine up to \$1,000 and/or 12 months in jail.

Political signs typically increases during an election year, but they are not the only problem. Signs advertising yard sales, real estate or goods and services for sale are often found in the right of way. Unauthorized signs can distract drivers or obstruct their view, which creates a safety hazard.

The same rules apply for vehicles as well. Encroachment of any kind can quickly become a problem.

The width of the right of way depends on the route. If there are power poles on the right of way, the edge is usually in front of the poles, Frost said. However, check with your local DOT office for guidance if you aren't sure where signs are allowed on a particular route.

To reclaim signs that have been removed by Department maintenance, contact your local GDOT office. Visit <http://www.dot.ga.gov/> to learn more about the Department and to find the office nearest you.

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