



Policy 230.4

NATIVE AMERICAN DUAL LANGUAGE SIGNING POLICY

Background

The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) recognizes the unique sovereign status of federally recognized tribes and the cultural values of all Native American tribes in Nebraska and is committed to strengthening the government-to-government relationship with the tribes.

Tribal Governments have requested that certain traffic signs display both English and Native language on the roads and highways located within the exterior boundaries of reservations.

General Requirements

The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) is the standard for all traffic control devices on all roadways open to public travel. Uniformity of traffic control devices simplifies the task of the driver as they meet motorists expectations, which aids in their recognition and understanding.

The MUTCD generally does not provide for the display of alternative or supplemental languages on traffic signs. However, tribal governments may request dual language signing on jurisdictional boundary, geographic features, and street name signs on roadways under NDOT jurisdiction located within the exterior boundaries of a reservation.

The display of both English and Native American languages on a single sign or sign assembly may be approved by NDOT, based on the following guidelines:

- Requests may include any jurisdictional boundary or geographic features including the following signs: Reservation Boundary signs, City name and population signs, streams, and Street Name signs.
- City name and population signs and Street Name signs require a letter of concurrence from the City. The letter of concurrence needs to specify that the City is in agreement that both languages be displayed and identify the placement of each language.
- Such signs shall be limited to locations within the exterior boundaries of any Indian reservation. Signs shall not be installed outside of tribal lands such as, but not limited to, concentrated ethnic neighborhoods or population centers.
- The language legend shall be the language as specified by the tribal government with jurisdiction through tribal council resolution.
- Native American languages shall not be displayed on any other sign including, but not limited to, Regulatory, Warning (including School Zone), and all other



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Guide (including Destination, General or Specific Service (Logo Signs), Tourist-Oriented Directional (Specific Service Signs), Auto Tour Route, and Acknowledgment) signs.

- The use of such signs shall be limited to conventional highways. Such signs shall not be installed on freeways and expressways.
- Such signs shall be post mounted on NDOT approved crashworthy roadside sign structures and shall not be overhead installations.
- Installation of the signs shall not interfere with the placement of any other necessary signing and shall not compromise the safety or efficiency of traffic flow. The signing shall be limited to one sign at an appropriate location in each route direction.
- All letters and numerals displayed on the sign for the main characters of the Native American language shall be as provided in the *Standard Highway Signs and Markings* reference publication. Unique characters that are necessary for the proper translation, but not provided in the FHWA Standard Alphabets, may be used. These unique characters are to be kept to a minimum and shall be based on the characteristics of the letter forms of the Standard Alphabets, such as stroke width and arc, to the extent practicable.

Process Overview

- The Tribal representative, as authorized by their tribal government, will request signs through the NDOT Traffic Engineering Division. The Tribal representative will include the following items with the request:
 - Submittal Letter
 - Tribal Council resolution that illustrates action of approval to request signs. The resolution shall specify the spelling of any Native language words.
 - Letter of concurrence from the City, which is required for any requested city name and population signs and/or Street Name signs. The letter of concurrence needs to specify that the city is in agreement that both languages be displayed.
 - Due to the length of some words in Native languages, some signs could be very large unless the word or phrase is separated onto two lines. Where possible, recommend where the word or phrase can be separated onto two lines without changing the meaning.
- The NDOT Traffic Engineering Division will provide the following information back to the representative:
 - Sign designs
 - Sign cost estimate, including signs, post, and labor.



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- The Tribal representative will review the sign designs for accuracy and if approved, will send the NDOT Traffic Engineering Division their approval. If there are errors, the Tribal representative should contact the NDOT Traffic Engineering Division with revisions prior to providing the approval.
- When the completed request is received with payment, the signs will be ordered for fabrication and installation.
- As per NDOT Traffic Engineering Policy 234.1 (Local Road Street Name & Rural Street Address Signs), the fabrication and installation of Street Name signs is the responsibility of the local authority.

Sign Design

- The Native language legend will be placed above the English legend on a case by case basis. Both legends will utilize upper/ lower case lettering.
- Due to the length of some Native American words and phrases the highway font Series D will be used. By using the Series D font and one inch less than the standard font height, the overall width of the signs when placing the Native American language on two lines should fit on flat sign panels. If the word or phrase cannot be displayed on two lines the overall size of the sign may require a larger sign structure. To reduce the overall sign width and cost of the sign, highway font Series C may be considered.
- The I-3 (Stream Identification) and D3-1 (Street Name) sign will include the Native language in Series D, 5-inch font and the English legend in Series D, 6-inch font.
- The NI5-1 (City Name and Population Signs) will include the Native American language in Series D, 5-inch font and the City Name with the English legend in Series D, 6-inch font.

Street Name Sign Example





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Border/ Boundary Sign Example

