



WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Division of Highways

1900 Kanawha Boulevard East • Building Five • Room 110
Charleston, West Virginia 25305-0430 • (304) 558-3505

Stephen T. Rumbaugh, P. E.
Secretary of Transportation
Commissioner of Highways

January 20, 2025

Submitted Electronically

MEMORANDUM

TO: Joint Standing Committee on Government Organization
Senate Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
House Committee on Technology and Infrastructure

FROM: Stephen T. Rumbaugh, P.E.
Secretary of Transportation
Commissioner of Highways

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "STR", is placed next to the printed name and title of the sender.

SUBJECT: Roadside Memorial Sign Program – 2024 Summary

The Roadside Memorial Sign Program that was adopted during the 2009 Legislative Session requires the Commissioner of Highways to prepare and submit a report describing the activities of the program.

The enclosed report summarizes all activities in 2024 involving the Roadside Memorial Sign Program. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

STR:Js

(Enclosure)

WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
2024 ROADSIDE MEMORIAL SIGN PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

During the 2009 Legislative Session, changes to §17-20 of the West Virginia State Code, along with the corresponding Legislative Rule §157-6-9 were adopted. These changes created the Roadside Memorial Sign Program to allow family members to memorialize individuals who died in a motor vehicle accident. The program is administered within the Division of Highways. The regulations state that the Commissioner of Highways shall prepare and submit a report detailing the activities of the Roadside Memorial Sign Program. The following is being provided to meet this requirement for the calendar year 2024.

THE PROGRAM PROCESS

An information page regarding the program is located on WVDOT's website, <https://transportation.wv.gov/highways/traffic/roadsidememorials/Pages/default.aspx>. A copy of the information page has been included in Appendix A of this report. The information page includes the basic details regarding the requirements and fees to participate in the program as well as the application for a sign, which is included in Appendix B of this report.

The Roadside Memorial Sign Committee meets on an as-needed basis, depending upon the receipt of applications. The committee reviews submitted applications for program eligibility. The eligibility is determined primarily from the date of the crash and whether the crash was caused or contributed to by wrongful conduct of the fatal crash victim. Serious traffic offenses, as defined in §17C-5-1 of the West Virginia State Code, as well as vehicles being used in the commission of a felony or fleeing from the police, are examples of wrongful conduct, which will result in the denial of an application. Applicants are informed in writing whether their application was approved or denied. Approved applications are invoiced for the sign. The manufacture and installation of signs for approved applicants are held until the invoice is paid in full and applicants are informed of an approximate installation date.

Each memorial sign consists of white lettering on a blue background. Applicants are permitted to select one of 4 messages for the sign. The possible messages are "*Please Drive Safely*", "*Please Buckle Up*", "*Don't Drink and Drive*", and "*Watch for Pedestrians*". Diagrams of the signs are included in Appendix C of this report. Signs also include the name of the individual(s) being memorialized. Once manufactured, the signs are installed as close as possible to the site where the fatal motor vehicle accident occurred.

Before the end of the 3-year installation period for the signs, applicants will be notified of their one-time opportunity to renew the application, which would result in the sign remaining in place for an additional 3 years. Applicants electing not to renew the application for the second 3-

year period and those reaching the end of their second 3-year period will be provided an opportunity to keep the sign upon its removal from the roadside.

THE ROADSIDE MEMORIAL SIGN PROGRAM IN 2024

In 2024, the Division received six applications for Roadside Memorial Signs. Five were approved, and one was denied. The Division has not yet received payment for the signs that were approved in 2024. This year, the Division has received the paid invoice for two signs that were approved in 2023 totaling \$400. The Division received payment for a sign that that was submitted in 2023 but wasn't approved until 2024 totaling \$200.

The Division estimates that approximately \$500 per sign has been spent to evaluate and process the application and to fabricate and install the sign. The Division has only incurred minimal costs related to the maintenance of Roadside Memorial Signs. The program allows for 1 total replacement of the sign in 3 years if stolen or destroyed. This is estimated to cost approximately \$330 per sign. No changes have been made to the cost structure of the program since its inception.

APPENDIX A
ROADSIDE MEMORIAL SIGN PROGRAM
INFORMATION SHEET
FROM
WWW.TRANSPORTATION.WV.GOV/HIGHWAYS/
TRAFFIC

Roadside Memorials

Approximately 270 people die annually as a result of crashes on West Virginia's highways. To address the problem, the West Virginia Division of Highways has partnered with the State's highway safety partners to develop a Strategic Highway Safety Plan to reduce highway related fatalities and injuries. Through coordinated disciplines of engineering, enforcement, education, and emergency medical services West Virginia has established a goal of "Zero Fatalities...Saving One Life at a Time". Additional information on West Virginia's efforts to reduce fatalities on state highways can be found by viewing the [2022-2026 West Virginia Strategic Highway Safety Plan](#). To help memorialize loved ones killed in vehicular crashes, and remind motorists to drive safely, the Division of Highways has established guidelines to erect and maintain Roadside Memorial Signs. The Roadside Memorial Sign is an official sign which is provided and placed by the Division of Highways and is installed as close as possible to the site where a fatal motor vehicle crash occurred. The memorial consists of white lettering on a blue background, and contains 1 of 4 messages chosen by the applicant followed by the name of the deceased:

"Please Drive Safely" – Standard safety message used for any fatality

"Please Buckle Up" – Alternative message for fatalities where victim was not wearing seat belt

"Don't Drink and Drive" – Alternative message for fatalities involving alcohol and/or drugs

"Watch for Pedestrians" – Alternative message for fatalities involving pedestrians



Roadside Memorial Signs may be requested within 3 years following the date of a fatal motor vehicle crash by a member of the immediate family of the victim. Only one sign will be permitted

per victim, and the sign may memorialize more than one victim. If application is approved, the applicant will be informed in writing of the decision along with an invoice for \$200 that compensates the Division for its review of the application, the installation of the roadside memorial sign and its maintenance for a period of 3 years from the date of installation. Upon receipt of the non-refundable payment, the Division shall manufacture and install the sign and shall notify the applicant in writing when the sign has been installed. The applicant may make a second, optional payment of \$200 to extend the display and maintenance of the sign for an additional 3 years. At the end of the initial or renewal period, whichever comes later, the sign will be removed and offered to the applicant. Please note that Roadside Memorial Signs are not permitted for individuals whose wrongful conduct was the proximate cause of the crash. If the Division's review discloses clear and convincing evidence that the crash resulted from the commission of a serious traffic offense as defined in the West Virginia Code, Section 17C-5-1 et seq., or from the use of a vehicle in the commission of a felony, or from flight from police, the Division will deny the application and inform applicant in writing.

Applications for memorial signs are available by contacting the Traffic Engineering Division at (304) 558-3063, the address below, or by [downloading the application from this site](#). Please return completed applications to:

Roadside Memorial Sign Program
WVDOH, Traffic Division
Building 5, Room A-248
1900 Kanawha Blvd, E
Charleston, West Virginia 25305-0430

For more information on the Legislative Rules governing Roadside Memorials, please click on the following link: [Excerpts from West Virginia Code](#)

APPENDIX B

ROADSIDE MEMORIAL SIGN PROGRAM

APPLICATION



Form DT-57

**WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS**

ROADSIDE MEMORIAL SIGN APPLICATION

Please print or type all information

IN MEMORY OF

Name: (Please print clearly in block letters the name as you would like it to appear on memorial)

Please select which message to be displayed on memorial sign by checking one box on the left.

	Message	Type of Crash
<input type="checkbox"/>	PLEASE DRIVE SAFELY	Standard safety message used for any fatality
<input type="checkbox"/>	PLEASE BUCKLE UP	Alternative message for fatalities where victim was not wearing seat belt
<input type="checkbox"/>	DON'T DRINK & DRIVE	Alternative message for fatalities involving alcohol and/or drugs
<input type="checkbox"/>	WATCH FOR PEDESTRIANS	Alternative message for fatalities involving pedestrians

CRASH INFORMATION

Date of Crash _____ County _____

Route, Road or Street Name _____

Involved Driver's Name (if known) _____

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Mailing Address _____

City and State _____

Zip Code _____ Day Phone: () _____

I certify that to the best of my knowledge the individual I am requesting to be memorialized did not commit a serious traffic offense that was determined to be proximate cause of the crash.

Signature of Applicant

NOTE: Applicant will be required to remit a check, payable to the West Virginia Department of Transportation in the amount of \$200, once sign application is approved. Please keep West Virginia Division of Highways informed of any change of address.

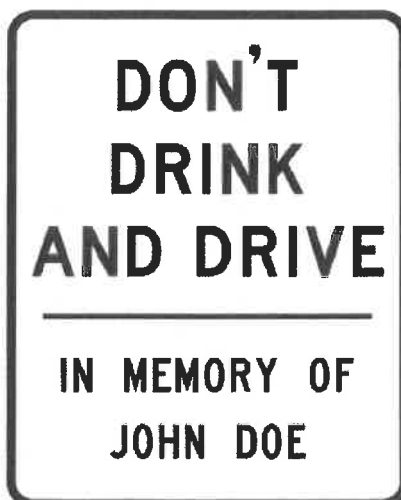
Please return completed application to:

**Roadside Memorial Sign Program
WVDOT, Traffic Division
Building 5, Rm A-248
1900 Kanawha Blvd, E
Charleston, West Virginia 25305-0430**

APPENDIX C

ROADSIDE MEMORIAL SIGN PROGRAM

SIGN DIAGRAMS



APPENDIX D

ROADSIDE MEMORIAL SIGN PROGRAM

SUMMARY

County	Please Drive Safely	Don't Drink and Drive	Please Buckle Up	Watch for Pedestrians	TOTAL
Barbour			1		1
Berkeley					0
Boone	2	2			4
Braxton	1				1
Brooke		1			1
Cabell	2	2			4
Calhoun					0
Clay					0
Doddridge	1				1
Fayette	2				2
Gilmer					0
Grant	1				1
Greenbrier					0
Hampshire			1		1
Hancock		1			1
Hardy	2				2
Harrison	3	1			4
Jackson	1				1
Jefferson	1				1
Kanawha	7	1			8
Lewis					0
Lincoln					0
Logan	1				1
McDowell					0
Marion	1				1
Marshall					0
Mason	6				6
Mercer	4		1		5
Mineral	1				1
Mingo	1				1
Monongalia	4				4
Monroe	1				1
Morgan					0
Nicholas					0
Ohio		2			2
Pendleton	1				1
Pleasants					0
Pocahontas					0
Preston	1	1			2
Putnam	1	1			2

County	Please Drive Safely	Don't Drink and Drive	Please Buckle Up	Watch for Pedestrians	TOTAL
Raleigh	6		1		7
Randolph	3				3
Ritchie	1				1
Roane	1				1
Summers					0
Taylor	1				1
Tucker					0
Tyler	2				2
Upshur	1	1			2
Wayne	1				1
Webster					0
Wetzel					0
Wirt					0
Wood	1	1			2
Wyoming					0
TOTAL	62	14	4	0	77