SOUTH CAROLINA TOURISM ORIENTED DIRECTIONAL SIGNS (TODS) PROGRAM

PRE-APPROVAL APPLICATION

The South Carolina General Assembly approved legislation creating Agritourism and Tourist Oriented Directional Signage Programs, commonly referred to as the TODS programs.

TODS is a program that allows tourism and agritourism oriented facilities to have directional signing placed in the highway right-of-way. The programs are a cooperative effort between the SC Department of Transportation, the SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism and the SC Department of Agriculture. These programs are designed to promote agritourism and tourist oriented facilities in rural areas by providing directional signing from the closest primary route, a designated SC or US route.

The Department of Agriculture and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism are responsible for promoting the programs and screening businesses to make sure that they qualify to participate in the programs. The screening process is referred to here after as “pre-approval.” Because the backbone of the program revolves around highway signing, the Department of Transportation will oversee the program and maintain all program regulations. The regulations were developed cooperatively by the three agencies and are in compliance with the Federal Highway Administration’s Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Program regulations are available at: scdot.org/business/agritourism.aspx

SCDOT’s authorized agent, South Carolina Logos, Inc., will administer the program and fabricate and install all program signs. South Carolina Logos, Inc. is the company that currently administers the Logo signing program on interstate routs. Businesses will submit final applications to SCDOT after receiving pre-approval from the Department of Agriculture or Park, Recreation and Tourism to participate in the program. The final application will be reviewed and approved or rejected by the TODS program oversight committee as required by section 57-25-8 of the South Carolina Code of laws. SCDOT will serve as chair of the oversight committee and will forward all approved applications to South Carolina Logos, Inc. to initiate the program participation process. The application process, as well as program participation fees, is described in more detail in the **Frequently Asked Questions** section that follows.

SC Department of Transportation

955 Park Street - P.O. Box 191
Columbia, SC 29201

855-GO-SCDOT (855-467-2368)

scdot.org

SC Department of Agriculture

1200 Senate Street
Columbia, SC 29201

803-734-2210

agriculture.sc.gov

SC Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism

1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, SC 29201

803-734-0166

scprt.com

INFORMATION

Applicant/Business Name _____

Physical Address _____

County where business is located _____

Contact Person(s) _____

Mailing Address *(If different from above)* _____

Phone Number(s) _____

Email _____ Website _____

Facebook _____ Instagram _____

Number of years in business _____

Please provide a brief description of your business/operation. Please include the activities you offer at your location. (Attach separate sheet if necessary.)

Do you currently have a system in place to measure customer or visitor traffic? If so, please elaborate.

What are the dates and hours of operation?

CRITERIA FOR AGRITOURISM-ORIENTED FACILITY

1. Located in a rural area.
2. Located on or accessible from a paved rural highway on the state highway system.
3. Offer agricultural activities related to production, harvest, processing, preservation, management, cultural, historical, recreational, educational, entertainment, and commercial activities, services and/or products to the general public; be unique and local in nature and not part of a chain of businesses having a common name under common ownership and management or under a franchise arrangement.
4. Have a permanent location and the agritourism-oriented activity shall be associated with a permanent building: constructed principally of brick, concrete block, stone, concrete, metal, or wood, or some combination of these materials.
5. Open to the public on a regular schedule with at least one employee attendant at the activity site for at least five (5) days per week, for at least six (6) hours per day (holidays excepted), for at least three (3) months out of the year.
6. Post its hours and days of operation at or near the main entrance so that they are visible to the public during closed as well as open hours.
7. If any general admission is charged, the costs of admission shall be clearly displayed to the prospective visitors at the entrance to the business.
8. Be located within five (5) miles of the intersecting route with a rural state primary highway where the program sign is to be erected.
9. Be an agritourism business qualified to participate in the SC Department of Agriculture promotional programs.
10. Have on-site signage that is visible from the fronting, paved rural highway.
11. Have driveway access from a paved public highway.
12. Provide off street parking accommodations with an exit having sufficient sight distance for motorists to safely enter the fronting roadway.
13. Be open to the general public and not by appointment or reservation only.
14. To qualify a business shall list its location, operating season and hours, contact information with the Department of Agriculture and have one of the following:
    a. a reception structure;
    b. a controlled gate;
    c. a staffed reception and orientation point; or
    d. permanent interpretation panels or displays.
15. To be eligible for the program, if an agritourism-oriented facility is located on a local paved road and more than one intersection from the nearest state route, the facility shall provide written documentation to ensure that the local government will permit similar directional signs on the right of way of the local system sufficient to guide motorist to the business.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Include a minimum of 3 photographs of your facility with your completed application. Electronic photos are accepted. Each picture must be labeled with applicants' name and date the picture was taken.

RETURN FORM

By Mail:
South Carolina Department of Agriculture
Attn: Jackie Moore
PO Box 11280
Columbia, SC 29211

Electronically:
jmoore@scda.sc.gov
FAX 803-734-9808

SUBMIT FORM CLEAR FORM

Save this form to your computer before filling and submitting electronically.

TODS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is a TODS location?

In accordance with program regulations, the following definitions establish what types of activities, facilities and areas may be considered TODS locations:

Agricultural Activity — an activity carried out on a farm or ranch that allows members of the general public for recreational, entertainment or educational purposes to participate in rural activities.

Rural Activity — an activity that involves wildlife management, farming and ranching, or associated historic, scientific research, cultural, harvest-your-own and natural activities and attractions.

Rural Area — A rural area is defined as any area located outside the officially recognized boundaries of a incorporated area listed by the United States Census Bureau as having a population of 5,000 or more according to the most recent census. (Note that the cities or towns in SC listed in the quicklinks portion of the United States Census Bureau website are for incorporated areas having a population of 5,000 or more.) In addition, an incorporated or unincorporated area having a population of less than 5,000 according to the most recent census data is considered to be a rural area.

Agritourism-Oriented Facility — a location where an agritourism activity is carried out by an agritourism professional or other agricultural facility as outlined in the TODS program regulations.

Agritourism Professional — any person engaged in the business of providing one or more agritourism activities, whether or not for compensation.

Tourism-Oriented Facility — a location that derives greater than 50% of its income or total visitors during a normal business season from road users not residing in the area of the facility.

2. Briefly describe the pre-approval and final application process to participate in the TODS programs?

Depending on your type of business/facility (agritourism or tourism), you should contact either the South Carolina Department of Agriculture or the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism to have them review your facility to determine if you qualify to participate in the programs. If your business meets criteria, the applicable department will provide a written certification to be included with your official application to SCDOT. You will then need to fill out the program application available on the SCDOT website, scdot.org/business/agritourism.aspx.

As required by program regulations, an oversight committee will meet semi-annually, once in January and once in July, to review and approve/disapprove your application. The committee is comprised of representatives of the three agencies, various tourist organizations and private industry. You will be notified in writing of the committee's decision. All approved locations will enter into a participation agreement with South Carolina Logos, Inc., SCDOT's contract administrator. Once and agreement has been signed and all fees collected, South Carolina Logos, Inc. will fabricate and install TODS signing within 60 days.

3. What does it cost to participate in the program?

Approved businesses will pay an initial participation fee ($100) and purchase the necessary signing and pay for its installation ($400 per sign). Every year thereafter, each business will pay an annual renewal fee ($100). A typical location will need three (3) directional signs to adequately guide visitors to its location. A typical location with three

signs will have an estimated expense of $1300 the first year with an annual $100 renewal fee every year thereafter. Participants will be billed by South Carolina Logos, Inc. once they have received final approval to participate in the program. Businesses will not submit any fees as part of the approval or application process. If signs become missing or damaged so that they are not serviceable, the participant will be responsible for any replacement sign costs, $300 per sign.

4. What does the sign look like, and how big is it and who makes them?

The signing must meet program design criteria outlined in the program regulations. The signs will be manufactured and installed by SC Logos, Inc. The sign will be similar to other highway signs with a few exceptions. The backgrounds of the signs will be blue instead of green or brown. The official logo of the appropriate program will also appear on the sign in an effort to establish an associated level of quality and service available at participating locations.

Each business' sign will have a maximum height of eighteen (18) inches and will typically be no less than seventy two (72) inches wide. The width may be governed by the available highway right-of- way. All letters will be upper case with a maximum height of six (6) inches. The arrow will be standard highway arrow, nine (9) inches wide and six (6) inches tall. The name of the location should be kept as brief as possible to adhere to the size limits of the signs. As mentioned earlier, right-of-way may be limited in some instances, especially on secondary roads.



Agritourism-Oriented Facility

Tourism-Oriented Facility

5. How many signs will I need?

The number of signs will depend on the number of turns from the nearest primary highway, a designated SC or US route. A typical location located on a secondary road that intersects with a primary route will need 2 or 3 signs. Applicants will be required to submit a sketch of the desired signing as part of the application process. An example sketch will be provided with the application form available of on the SCDOT website.

6. Is there a limit to the number of businesses that can be signed, and if so, how will that be determined?

Yes. The number of business sign panels per sign assembly will be four (4). The maximum number of sign assemblies per intersection will be three (3), for a total of 12 available business sign panels. In the event that more businesses submit applications at a particular intersection than there are spaces available, the businesses closest to the intersection with the nearest primary route where the signs are to be installed will qualify. Due to the rural nature of the programs, it is unlikely that that this situation will occur. The measurement will be from the driveway entrance of the business to the intersection with the nearest primary route.

7. As for my location signing that includes hours and days of operation as well as interpretive signing that is visible from the road, do you have specifications?

While there is no specification, you should consider the size of letters used on the TODS signs for your hours and days of operation. If you choose to use interpretive signage, consider using a National Park Service (NPS) standard.



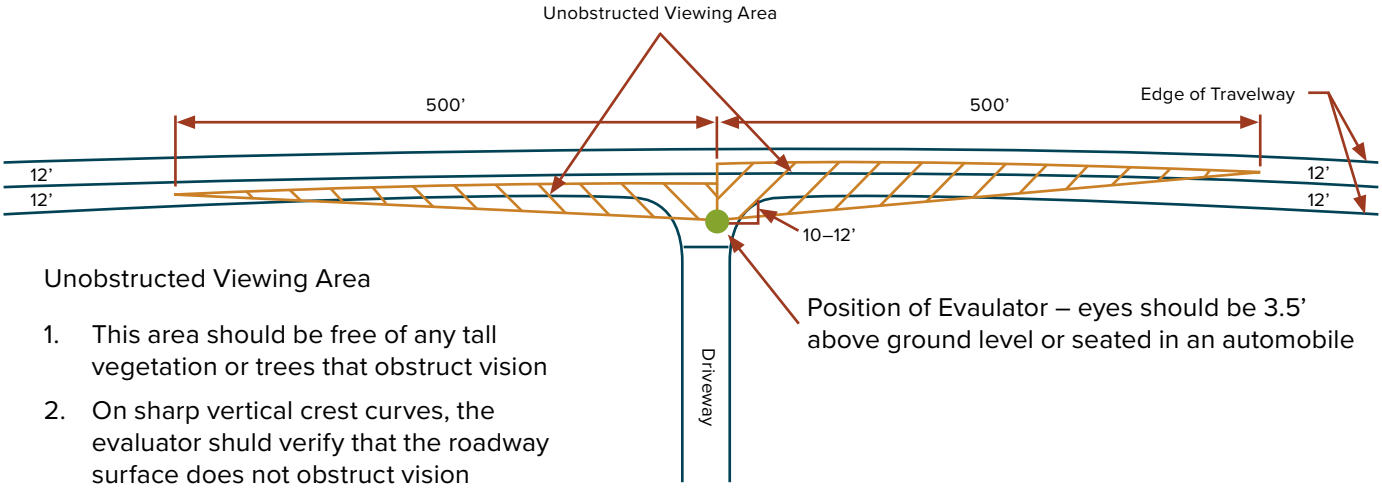


8. What do you mean by "parking accommodations with an exit having sufficient sight distance for motorists to safely enter the fronting roadway"?

Safety of motorists visiting a location is a key concern. On-site parking will be required for participation in the programs. When entering a facility, sufficient space should be provided between the driveway and the parking to allow the motorist to safely and completely make the turn from the fronting roadway. Motorists leaving a facility should have a clear view of the fronting road in both directions. Sight lines should not be blocked by business signs or other obstructions. Driveways located on sharp curves should be avoided.

In general, a motorist should have approximately 500 feet of unobstructed visibility in each direction when positioned at the end of the drive. For checking the visibility, the position of the eyes of the evaluator should be located 10 to 12 feet from the edge of the travel way and approximately 3.5 feet above ground level. This represents the approximate position a driver will be in when leaving the facility seated in an automobile. Measure down the road 500 feet in each direction and determine if an approaching car is visible from that distance. See the illustration below.

In the event that the evaluator has questions or concerns about a particular situation, the evaluator may contact the SCDOT Director of Traffic Engineering at (803) 737-1462 for assistance in evaluating the safety of a drive.



Unobstructed Viewing Area

1. This area should be free of any tall vegetation or trees that obstruct vision
2. On sharp vertical crest curves, the evaluator shuld verify that the roadway surface does not obstruct vision

9. Conclusion

While the qualification criteria and frequently asked questions cover most of the TODS program requirements, specific information is contained in the TODS program regulations. A link is provided on the SCDOT website as part of the program application. Please review the program regulations prior to requesting assistance with your application process.