

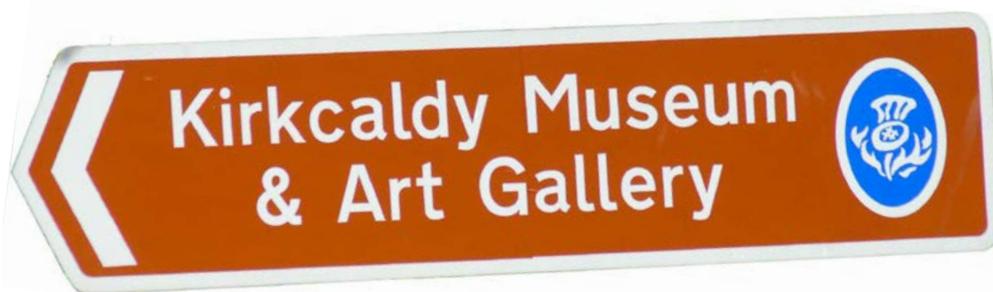
ADVICELINK



A Guide to Signposting for Tourism Businesses



This AdviceLink guide contains information on who can apply for a tourist sign and who the application should be made to.



The purpose of tourist signs, also known as brown signs or white on brown signs, is to provide clear and consistent directions to enable visitors to reach tourist destinations safely by car, and minimise the risk of dangerous manoeuvres. Tourist signs are directional aids, not advertising signs, and should not be used as a substitute for effective marketing. They are intended to assist attractions and facilities which visitors would otherwise have difficulty finding.

Definition of a Tourist Destination

Tourist signs are relevant for specific tourist destinations. A tourist destination is defined in traffic sign legislation* as a permanently established attraction or facility which:

- a) Attracts or is used by visitors to an area;
- b) Is open to the public without **prior booking** during its normal opening hours; and
- c) Is recognised by VisitScotland.

*As defined by The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002

The list below is not meant to be an exhaustive list but gives an indication of the types of tourist destinations eligible to apply for tourist signs.

Tourist Attractions include

- Visitor Centres
- Theme parks
- Historic buildings and properties
- Ancient monuments
- Museums
- Zoos
- Parks and gardens
- Natural attractions (such as nature reserves, beaches, picnic sites and viewpoints)
- Tourist shops
- Leisure/ Sports centres
- Golf courses
- Garden Centres

Tourist Facilities include

- Hotels
- Guesthouses
- Bed & Breakfasts
- Restaurants
- Holiday parks
- Caravan and Camping parks
- Youth Hostels
- Visitor Information Centres
- Visitor participation establishments (e.g. potteries, cook schools, etc.)
- Picnic sites

Establishments primarily acting as retail outlets (including retail parks, shopping centres and garden centres) are only eligible for white on brown tourist signs if recognised by VisitScotland as a 'Tourist Shop' through our Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme in addition to meeting all the other relevant criteria.



Tourist destinations not eligible for tourist signposting:

Self-catering accommodation, except:

- Where multiple units have a manned reception area and have on-spec accommodation available on a nightly basis.

Or

- Where the accommodation is eligible for traffic management or road safety issues in certain circumstances.

Worshipping churches

Exclusive use venues

Group accommodation providers

Am I eligible to apply?

In order to be eligible to apply for signage, you are required to demonstrate participation in a relevant Quality Assurance scheme. VisitScotland's role in the application process is to provide an accreditation letter confirming that the applicant holds a current Quality Assurance award.

If your business has two distinct elements and you wish to mention both on the brown sign, then both elements need to meet the individual eligibility criteria. For example, with "Hotel & Restaurant" both the hotel and the restaurant would need to be separately Quality Assured. Another example might be "Gift Shop & Cafe".

Please note that VisitScotland is only responsible

for approving eligibility to apply for signage and is not responsible for approving signage. The final agreement to sign your establishment is at the discretion of your local authority for local roads and Transport Scotland for trunk roads and motorways.

Transport Scotland is responsible for dealing with all applications to erect signs on trunk roads and motorways. These applications are usually handled by the trunk road operators who are appointed by Transport Scotland. You can access the 'Trunk Road and Motorway Tourist Signposting Policy and Guidance' document by going to: http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/rrd_reports/uploaded_reports/j7818/j7818.pdf

How do I apply for a tourist sign?

Written confirmation of your Quality Assurance scheme participation is a requirement and an official accreditation letter can be obtained by sending a request to signposting@visitscotland.com

Please note that VisitScotland cannot issue a letter of accreditation in advance of a Quality Assurance visit, or before the star grading has been officially awarded.



Applying for a sign on a local road

Once in receipt of your accreditation letter an official application can be submitted to your Home Traffic Authority (HTA). For local roads your HTA will be your local authority roads department. They co-ordinate the application process and are able to offer guidance with queries relating to sign location,

Applying for a sign on a trunk road or motorway

In cases where a destination takes its access directly from a trunk road or motorway, Transport Scotland is the Home Traffic Authority.

If your business is situated directly on a trunk road or motorway you should contact Transport Scotland with your accreditation letter to make a formal application.

Please consult Transport Scotland's Trunk Road and Motorway Tourist Signposting Policy and Guidance document which is available to download at: http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/rrd_reports/uploaded_reports/j7818/j7818.pdf

number of signs, costs, timescales and so on.

They can also assist should your request cross local authority boundaries or include a mix of trunk road, motorway and local road sites.

VisitScotland can provide the most suitable HTA contact upon request.

Not currently eligible?

If you are not currently participating in one of VisitScotland's Quality Grading Schemes, and would like to join, you can find out more by visiting our website:

www.visitscotland.org/business_support/quality_assurance.aspx

If you think that there is not an appropriate scheme for your business, but you would still like to apply for a sign, please contact VisitScotland to discuss your options. You can email signposting@visitscotland.com



Frequently Asked Questions

Here are some frequently asked questions about Tourist Signposting:

1. What information do tourist signs include?

The information shown on a tourist sign must conform to the designs prescribed in the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-traffic-signs-regulations-and-general-directions-tsr-gd-2002. Effective signs provide clear information allowing visitors to reach a destination safely. A tourist sign will show the name of the business, distance to the business (where appropriate) and the VisitScotland thistle logo. Further information on this can be obtained from your local authority.

2. My business is Quality Assured and I have requested an accreditation letter - when will I receive it?

Generally, for existing participants in Quality Assurance schemes, VisitScotland issues the accreditation letter within 2-5 working days. For businesses applying to join a Quality Assurance scheme for the first time, a grading visit is normally scheduled within 16 weeks of receipt of an application to join. Please note that VisitScotland cannot issue a letter of accreditation in advance of a Quality Assurance visit, or before the star grading has been officially awarded.

3. What happens if I buy or sell a business with a brown sign?

If you take over a business that previously had a brown sign then you should make sure that your business still meets the criteria to be eligible for tourist signposting.

This includes continued participation in the relevant Quality Assurance scheme on an annual basis. If you sell your business and have a brown sign, remember to pass the details of your brown sign to the new owner as it will become their responsibility. The business will be required to be Quality Assured with the new owner to retain the brown sign(s).

4. What if I withdraw from the VisitScotland Quality Assurance Scheme?

If you withdraw from a Quality Assurance scheme, fail to achieve an award or no longer meet the criteria, you will be liable to have your sign removed at your cost. To retain eligibility for tourist signposting you must meet the Quality Assurance criteria on an annual basis.

5. How much do tourist signs cost?

It is advisable to have a realistic understanding of the likely costs and to have appropriate funding identified before proceeding with an application. Prices can range from several hundred pounds for small signs on local roads to many thousands of pounds for larger motorway or trunk road signing. Costs are often influenced by the type of road on which the signs are to be installed as well as the distance to the destination. Additional factors that need to be taken into consideration are design costs, road safety and traffic management requirements, materials used, number of signs required and the size and position of the sign(s).

6. How long will it take to for my tourist signposting to be installed?

Tourist signs take time to be installed. The process of installing a sign includes approval, agreement on wording and number of signs, manufacture of the signs and physically setting them up. The majority of applications are usually concluded within 6 months. However, please note that on occasion, the process can take significantly longer and may take up to 2 years from start to finish depending on the complexity involved.

7. Can I apply for Motorway signing for my visitor attraction?

To be eligible for signs on the motorway network, your establishment should be Quality Assured and have received receive at least 50,000 visitors each year or in excess of 10,000 visitors in the peak month. In either case these thresholds should have been met in each of the previous three years. Please note that these visitor number thresholds apply only to motorways – there is no visitor number requirement for non-motorway trunk roads (A class roads).

Adequate car parking to accommodate the volume of vehicles expected to visit the tourist attraction or facility is also taken into consideration. Where appropriate this parking should include provision for the parking of minibuses and coaches.

For further details and advice on this please contact Transport Scotland:

www.transportscotland.gov.uk

Published by VisitScotland,
Reprinted April 2016

Ocean Point One
94 Ocean Drive
Edinburgh
EH6 6JH
Tel 0131 472 2222
www.visitscotland.org

Photography credits: Paul Tomkins / Chris Robson / VisitScotland / Scottish Viewpoint

The information in this publication is given in good faith and every effort has been made to ensure its accuracy. VisitScotland can accept no responsibility for any error or misrepresentation. All liability for loss, disappointment, negligence or other damage caused by reliance on the information contained in this publication is hereby excluded.