



ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY

**CALTRANS**  
**ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY**  
**PROGRAM**



**Information and Application**





## ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY

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The Caltrans Adopt-A-Highway Program provides an avenue for individuals, organizations, or businesses to help maintain sections of roadside within California's State Highway System. In addition to the aesthetic benefits of cleaner and more beautiful roadsides, participants help to prevent potential pollutants from entering our waterways and save California taxpayers millions of dollars every year.

The Adopt-A-Highway Program provides a great opportunity to promote civic responsibility, community pride, and camaraderie within organizations. And, even though the Adopt-A-Highway Program may not be used as a forum for advertising or public discourse, Adopt-A-Highway courtesy signs provide prominent recognition for its participants.



# CALTRANS ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROGRAM

## What Kind of Work is Involved?

Participation can include one or more of the following activities:

- Removing litter on a two-mile stretch of roadside (frequency varies with location).
- Planting and establishing three acres of trees and/or shrubs according to an approved plan.
- Planting and establishing three acres of wildflowers according to an approved plan.
- Planting and establishing a small area of wildflowers, called a “spot” wildflower adoption, according to an approved plan. (Note: Spot wildflower adopters do not qualify for Adopt-A-Highway signs.)
- Painting over graffiti as needed from one or more highway structures.
- Controlling weeds on five acres of right-of-way according to an approved plan.



## Who Can Participate?

- Individuals
- Organizations
- Businesses
- City, county, state, and federal agencies

You can perform the work with your own volunteers or hire a contractor to perform the work on your behalf.

Depending on the adoption site and subject to Caltrans approval, minors, aged 16 and older, may participate. Groups including minors must have at least one adult supervisor over the age of 21 at the site for every five minors present.

Entities that advocate violence, violation of the law, or discrimination based upon race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, medical condition, marital status, age, sex, or sexual orientation may not participate in the Adopt-A-Highway Program.

## How Long Do Adoptions Last?

Adopt-A-Highway Encroachment Permits are issued for a period of five years. You may apply for additional five-year permits, provided that you (or your contractor) have satisfactorily met the terms of the existing permit and the site remains suitable for adoption. You may not transfer your encroachment permit to another organization.



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## How Much Does It Cost?

A volunteer group that performs litter removal and uses a standard recognition panel on their Adopt-A-Highway sign will incur no costs.

However, certain supplies needed for other adoption types, such as plants, tools, or paints, are usually purchased by the adopting group.

Caltrans will supply the following items *free* of charge:

- An Adopt-A-Highway Encroachment Permit.
- The manufacture and installation of Adopt-A-Highway signs and standard recognition panels.
- A safety orientation for the group's safety leader.
- Safety gear for volunteer participants (hard hats, vests, gloves, safety glasses, and litter pickers) and safety-training materials.
- Adopt-A-Highway litter bags.
- Collection and disposal of filled Adopt-A-Highway litter bags and other debris cleared from the adoption site.



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## How Do I Adopt a Highway?

- Decide on the general location and type of adoption you want.
- Discuss the location and project with your local Caltrans Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator. Contact information is provided on page 6 of this brochure.
- Submit a completed Adopt-A-Highway Program Application to your coordinator. Applications are available from Adopt-A-Highway Coordinators and on our web site.
  - If you are hiring a contractor, they must submit a separate program application.
  - If your adoption includes planting or vegetation control, you will be required to submit work plans and schedules along with your application. Handouts, containing instructions for preparing plans and schedules, are available from your Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator and on our web site.
- Obtain approval of your recognition panel's wording and design from your coordinator.
- Wait for your Adopt-A-Highway Encroachment Permit (signaling your acceptance into the program) to arrive in the mail. This may take several weeks.
- Make sure that you understand and can conform to all of the provisions listed in your Adopt-A-Highway Encroachment Permit package BEFORE beginning work.

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## What if the Section I Want Is Already Adopted?

When an existing adopter gives up a site, it is offered to the first group on the waiting list.

You must submit an Adopt-A-Highway Program Application to be placed on the waiting list. Your name can be put on a waiting list for one or more sites and will be ranked according to the date your completed application was received.

Please be aware that it could take many years to cycle through a waiting list. If there is a long waiting list for the area you want, you might wish to consider participating in another type of adoption for that highway section, or consider adopting in a different location.



## Adopt-A-Highway Signs

Caltrans will place Adopt-A-Highway signs at your adopted section in recognition of your contribution to the program. Each sign has a white, recognition panel where your group's name will be displayed.

Caltrans provides "standard" recognition panels at no cost. These display the group's name in black lettering, using the standard highway signs type face.

Subject to Caltrans approval, your logo can be added to the standard panel. There is no charge for installation of the logo, however groups must obtain an adhesive-backed logo at their own cost.

If all panel elements are provided by the adopter at their own cost, the panel is considered to be a "custom" panel. Adhesive-backed panel elements can be provided to Caltrans for application onto a blank panel, or, a completed panel can be supplied. Caltrans will provide blank recognition panels at no cost to participants who choose the latter option. There is no fee charged for application of panel elements.



## Recognition Panel Design Rules

In all cases, items to be displayed on recognition panels shall be solely determined by Caltrans.

Although there is advertising value inherent in Adopt-A-Highway signs, they are not a forum for advertising or public discourse. Their purpose is to recognize who is providing the adoption service, not what services the adopter provides, what products they sell, or where they are located.

In order to comply with Federal law prohibiting advertising on state right-of-way, our recognition panel rules are necessarily restrictive. With only a few exceptions, the name and/or logo of the applicant is all that will be permitted on a panel.

A handout called, *Recognition Panel Design Guidelines*, is available on our web site. The handout explains rules regarding use of logos, colors, lettering style, and image area. It would be a good idea to review it before designing your panel.

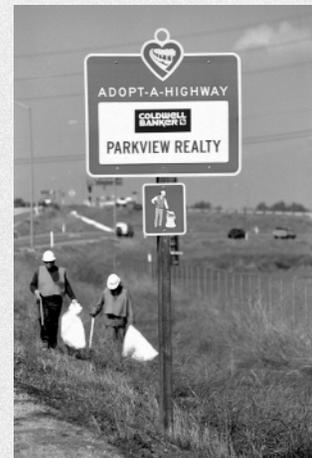
### For More Information

A complete copy of *Adopt-A-Highway Sign Restrictions and Controls* can be downloaded from the Adopt-A-Highway web site.

## Documentation Requirements for Recognition Panels

The following documents must be submitted along with program applications:

- Businesses must submit a copy of their business license.
- Businesses and organizations wishing to display a logo must provide a copy of the logo being used in a corporate document (i.e. business card, letterhead, web site, etc.).
- All groups planning to purchase and provide decals to be placed on their recognition panel must submit a scaled (reduced proportionally) and colored proof of the proposed design.



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## What Is an Encroachment Permit?

Your Encroachment Permit and other documents included in your encroachment permit package are your contract with Caltrans. The permit authorizes you to perform specific tasks on a designated section of the State's right-of-way for a five-year period. The permit also includes safety measures that must be adhered to.

### Revoking Permits

Violation of any of the provisions of your permit could result in its being revoked. You, or Caltrans, may cancel the permit anytime you are unable to meet the permit requirements.

Caltrans may temporarily suspend permits for safety reasons, such as construction in your adopted area.

### Multiple Permits

Up to ten adoptions per group per district are permitted. Adoptions for two or more consecutive/adjoining sites are permitted. However, if a waiting list becomes established for one of the adjoining sections, then the adopter will be asked to relinquish it when their permit period has ended.



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## How Does Caltrans Designate Adoption Sites?

Any roadside within California's State Highway System has the potential for being adopted. Caltrans personnel carefully review sites in order to determine whether or not they are suitable. Typical questions asked during a review are:

- Does the area meet the Adopt-A-Highway Program's minimum mileage/acreage requirements?
- Has construction been planned for the location?
- Is maintenance of the area being performed by another agency?
- Is there safe access to and from the site?
- What are the working conditions at the site?
- What work frequency will be required?
- Will the use of motorized equipment be required to accomplish the maintenance task?

Once a site is reviewed, it will be classified as either suitable or not suitable for adoption.

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## What Is a Contracted Adoption?

Individuals, organizations, and businesses can adopt highway sections and have the adoption tasks performed by a professional business through contract or agreement. Adopt-A-Highway Program literature refers to all businesses hired by adopters as "contractors." The adoption itself is called a "contracted adoption."

Groups who hire contractors are called "sponsors."

Use of contractors is sometimes preferred. For example, sites that require litter removal more than 12 times a year are usually difficult for volunteer groups to maintain. And generally, only contractors are permitted to use motorized equipment on the State's right-of-way.

A contractor can be used for any adoption type. A contractor can be hired to perform all or only a portion of the adoption tasks.

Your local Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator can provide you with a list of contractors known to provide Adopt-A-Highway services in your area. New contractors will be considered, provided that they meet all of the Adopt-A-Highway Program's insurance and licensing requirements.



## Safety Is Our Number One Concern

Participants must realize that they will be working in a potentially hazardous environment and must agree to diligently follow all safety requirements.

In addition to the documents provided in your encroachment permit package, Caltrans provides volunteer adopters with safety training materials. The first is a video called, *Get Serious About Safety*. Part one of the video focuses on the special responsibilities of group leaders. Part two was developed for group leaders to show when giving safety training to their group members.

You will also receive two handouts. The *Safety Requirements for Participants* summarizes Adopt-A-Highway safety procedures and the *Bag It, Move It, or Leave It?* sheet provides instructions for handling found items. These are to be used when conducting safety reviews with your group prior to each work event.

In addition, periodic safety bulletins will be mailed to volunteer groups advising of any current safety issues.

Caltrans waives insurance requirements for volunteer participants. However, all participants must agree to the terms set forth in Adopt-A-Highway Special Provisions item entitled, *Responsibility for Damage*. (The special provisions included in your encroachment permit package.)

Sample copies of the special provisions and safety handouts can be downloaded from our web site.

## Each Group Must Designate a Safety Leader

Unless otherwise notified, Caltrans considers the person who signed the Adopt-A-Highway Program Application to be the group's designated safety leader.

### Safety-Related Responsibilities

Once your encroachment permit is received, the safety leader must:

- Schedule a safety orientation with the Caltrans field representative identified on the encroachment permit.
- Complete the safety orientation within two weeks of the permit's start date.
  - Obtain safety equipment for all participants.
  - Obtain copies of the *Safety Requirements for Participants* and the *Bag It, Move It, or Leave It?* handouts and the *Get Serious About Safety* video.
- Provide initial safety training to all members of the group prior to working on the highway.
- Conduct brief safety reviews before the group goes out to work at the site.
- Hold an annual safety training session for all group members.
- Ensure that all group members comply with safety procedures.

### Other Responsibilities

- Provide Caltrans with at least five days notice prior to each work event.
- Begin work within 30 calendar days of your permit's start date.
- Participate in annual Spring and Fall cleanup events.
- Notify Caltrans if there is a change of group safety leader, address, or phone number.
- Notify Caltrans if you wish to cancel your adoption.
- Ensure that the tasks listed in your encroachment permit package are completed as scheduled.



**For More Information,  
Contact Your Caltrans District  
Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator**

**ADA Notice:** For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document is available in alternate formats. For information, please call or write:

Department of Transportation  
Maintenance Program  
Adopt-A-Highway, MS-31  
1120 N Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Voice: (916) 654-2926  
TTY: CRS-711

**Caltrans Districts**



COUNTY	CALTRANS DISTRICT	PHONE*
<i>Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Lake</i>	District 1	(707) 441-5761
<i>Siskiyou, Modoc, Trinity, Shasta, Lassen, Tehama, Plumas</i>	District 2	(530) 225-3277
<i>Glenn, Butte, Sierra, Colusa, Sutter, Yuba, Nevada, Placer, Yolo, Sacramento, El Dorado</i>	District 3	(530) 741-4002
<i>Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Sonoma</i>	District 4 (North, South, and West Bays)	(510) 286-6227
<i>Alameda, Contra Costa, Solano</i>	District 4 (East Bay, Solano, and Delta)	(510) 286-4433
<i>Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey</i>	District 5 (North)	(831) 372-1132
<i>San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara</i>	District 5 (South)	(805) 542-4755
<i>North Fresno, NW Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Tulare</i>	District 6 (North)	(559) 445-5394
<i>South Fresno, SW Kern, Tulare</i>	District 6 (South)	(559) 488-4022
<i>Ventura, NW Los Angeles</i>	District 7 (North)	(213) 897-4273
<i>SE Los Angeles</i>	District 7 (South)	(213) 897-3871
<i>San Bernardino</i>	District 8 (North)	(760) 252-1016
<i>Riverside</i>	District 8 (South)	(909) 383-4468
<i>Mono, Inyo, Eastern Kern</i>	District 9	(760) 872-0622
<i>San Joaquin, Amador, Calaveras, Alpine, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, Merced, Mariposa</i>	District 10	(209) 948-7462
<i>San Diego, Imperial</i>	District 11	(619) 688-3327
<i>Orange</i>	District 12	(949) 724-2598

\*You Can Call Toll Free: 1-866-ADOPTAHWY  
(1-866-236-7824)



Visit Us On The Web:  
<http://adopt-a-highway.dot.ca.gov>



## Adoption Checklist

- Decide on the general location and type of adoption you want.
- Call your local Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator to discuss available adoption opportunities and select a specific site.
- Send a signed and completed Adopt-A-Highway Program Application to your local Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator. Groups using contractors must have their contractor submit a separate application.
- Planting and vegetation control applicants must submit plans and a work schedule. If you are certain that you want to adopt a particular site but need time to prepare these documents, submit your application without them. You will be granted 30 calendar days, from the date your application was received, to prepare and submit them.
- Obtain approval of your recognition panel's wording and design from your Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator.
- Wait for your Adopt-A-Highway Encroachment Permit package to arrive in the mail. *This could take several weeks.*
- Call the Caltrans representative listed on your Encroachment Permit and schedule a safety orientation.
- Attend the safety orientation and collect your Adopt-A-Highway supplies, safety equipment, and safety video and handouts.
- Provide safety training and safety equipment to all group members before working.
- Notify the Caltrans representative shown on your permit at least five days prior to each work event. Begin work within 30 calendar days of your permit's start date
- Abide by the provisions listed in your Encroachment Permit package and enjoy participating in the Adopt-A-Highway Program along with the thousands of other dedicated Californians.

### Notes:

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California Department of Transportation  
Maintenance Program, MS-31  
1120 N Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

