

Operational Instruction

19.15

Roadside Memorials



Government of South Australia

Department of Planning,
Transport and Infrastructure



TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT Operational Instructions

Roadside Memorials - 19.15

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Manager, Technical Services
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For information regarding the interpretation of this document please contact:

Technical Services Section, Safety and Service Division, DPTI
Email: dpti.tassadmins@sa.gov.au

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1. Overview

Every year, too many people lose their lives on South Australian roads. Frequently, family and friends have chosen to honour their memories by erecting some type of temporary roadside memorial.

While DPTI does not endorse the installation of roadside memorials, DPTI respects the need for people to erect roadside memorials. DPTI tolerates their installation but the need to provide a safe and efficient road network to all road users must be met under the obligations of the Highways Act 1926.

2. Scope

This policy provides guidance to DPTI officers regarding roadside memorials. Each case should be considered on an individual basis.

The Department tolerates the placement of memorials in the roadside under the conditions stated below out of sympathetic consideration to the grieving. It is otherwise the practice of this Department to minimise the number of obstructions and distractions in road reserves.

This policy applies to roads under the care and control of the South Australian Government.

2.1 *Definition of a roadside memorial*

A roadside memorial can be described as an object or image constructed, erected, planted, painted or placed temporarily within the road reserve in honour of family or friends whose lives have been lost on the road or road reserve. In this instance, a roadside memorial does not include a roadside crash marker.

3. Background

There are increasing numbers of roadside memorials being erected throughout South Australia.

The presence of roadside memorials needs to be treated with sensitivity, knowing that they:

- can be upsetting to some members of the community;
- can be distracting to other road users, thereby creating a safety hazard; and
- result in visitors stopping at memorials, potentially creating a traffic hazard especially on points of the road network which have subsequently been identified as an area of increased risk.

In addition, roadside memorials create a dilemma for ongoing road maintenance activities, as they:

- add to the task of maintaining the road verge by increasing the number of obstructions during surface maintenance, such as grading, and result in trimming having to be done by hand;
- may frustrate and delay the progress of programmed works which could be further complicated by the need to remove or relocate the memorial; and
- could be an impediment to service providers with assets in the road reserve.

Accordingly, it is appropriate that some controls be applied to their use.

4. Statement of policy

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DPTI has an obligation to provide a safe and efficient road network.

As roadside memorials are placed within the road reserve, not on the carriageway, Councils are responsible for their approval/authorisation. It is probably fair to say however that in most cases these memorials are installed prior to any consultation with Council.

DPTI will:

- Be considerate and respectful of the needs of persons wishing to install roadside memorials;
- Not accept responsibility for the security or maintenance of roadside memorials;
- Will not remove any roadside memorials without attempting to first contact the concerned parties, i.e. family, friends, etc.
- Remove any roadside memorial not conforming to this policy.

5. Road management principles

5.1 *Contact details to be included on the memorial*

DPTI may need to contact the memorial maker in the event that a memorial is impacting on maintenance, road work activities or road safety. When someone places a roadside memorial the last thing on their mind is letting the road authority know how to contact them.

Where possible, persons leaving roadside memorials should be encouraged to include impersonal contact details on the memorial, in the event that DPTI needs to contact them.

5.2 *Road management or maintenance activities*

In accordance with its legislative responsibilities under the Highways Act 1926, DPTI is responsible for maintaining the arterial road network for which it has care, control and management. Roadside memorials are not to unreasonably interfere with maintenance and road management activities (such as mowing of grass).

Similarly, roadside memorials are not to impact on the management of non-road related infrastructure located in the road reserve, including above and below ground utility services.

Where a roadside memorial has fallen into disrepair or unreasonably interferes with road management or maintenance activities, DPTI will remove the memorial in accordance with Section 7 of this document.

5.3 Roadworks near roadside memorials

Where construction or road works are required to be undertaken by DPTI that will impact on a roadside memorial, and as with maintenance activities, DPTI will remove the memorial in accordance with Section 7 of this document.

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6. Road safety principles

DPTI has adopted the Safe System¹ approach to managing the arterial road network and believes it is important that roadside memorials do not increase the risk to road users. Roadside memorials are to be non-hazardous to road users and be placed in a location that enables people to visit safely. To align with the Road Safety Strategy, the following guidance may be used.

Location

DPTI does not endorse the placing of roadside memorials, however recognises that placing a roadside memorial at the location of the crash can be very important to family and friends and are willing to tolerate the installation of such memorials, provided that they are placed in locations which minimise the road safety risk to all road users. For example in locations other than:

- on traffic islands;
- on medians;
- on roundabouts;
- attached to roadside infrastructure or traffic control devices;
- within design deflection zone of barrier;
- in close proximity to traffic signals, intersections (including T intersections) or curves (generally at least 30m);
- on urban or rural freeways (including freeway ramps);
- near the edge of road seals (generally at least 3m away);
- obscuring road signs or interfering with the role of traffic control devices; and
- near the edge of shared paths (ideally 2m away).

DPTI is also concerned for the safety of people who place and visit roadside memorials. Roadside memorials are to be located such that visitors are able to safely access the memorial, and be safe during their time there. Safe parking locations are a key consideration.

Materials

Memorials should not be made from materials or placed in such a way that would make them dangerous if involved in a crash (i.e. not concreted into the ground).

¹ For information on the Road Safety Strategy, visit <http://www.dpti.sa.gov.au/towardszerotogether>

Items of a personal nature, such as flowers and mementos, are to be firmly affixed to the memorial so as not to pose a road safety hazard or maintenance issue.

Any roadside memorial presenting a safety hazard may be removed by DPTI in accordance with Section 7 of this document.

7. Removal and storage/disposal

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Prior to undertaking necessary works, DPTI will attempt to contact the memorial maker to arrange for its modification, relocation or removal. Council may also have a record of the persons involved in the installation of the memorial and it may be worth consideration to contact the Council at this stage.

In the event that the memorial owner cannot be contacted, placing a 'notice of intent to modify, relocate or remove' on the roadside memorial will be considered. Where practical, memorials will be relocated and stored at a secure location.

After a storage period of 12 months, and where the persons involved in the installation of the memorial cannot be contact, a memorial may be disposed of by the Department.