

Roads Service Policy & Procedure Guide: RSPPG_E044

Title: Signing of Approved Rural Recreational Walking Routes on Public Roads

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Classification

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Notes

Certification

This document complies with Roads Service Policy. For Implementation and Issue Dates see above.

(Signed) Director of Engineering
Bob Cairns
Certification Date:

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This Roads Service Policy & Procedure Guide (RSPPG):-

- a) Is aimed at all staff involved with facilitating the implementation of approved rural recreational walking routes;
- b) Sets out procedure to be followed when approving and designing directional signing for approved rural recreational walking routes.

1.2 Definitions

1.2.1 CAAN - Countryside Access and Activities Network.
(www.countrysiderecreation.com)

1.2.2 NIEA – Northern Ireland Environment Agency. (www.ni-environment.gov.uk)

1.2.3 Department - Department for Regional Development.

1.2.4 Approved Route - a walking route, mainly rural and off-road, approved by NIEA and indicated by the use of the fern symbol on signage (see Appendix C).

1.2.5 Accredited Route - a walking route, mainly rural and off-road, accredited by CAAN and approved by NIEA and branded as a Quality Walk. The 'Quality Stamp' disc is displayed at the start and finish points (see Appendix C diagram vii.).

1.2.6 Ulster Way – a long distance walking route around Northern Ireland accredited by CAAN and approved by NIEA.

1.2.7 Waymarked Ways - a series of accredited long distance walking routes (over 20 miles) developed by CAAN in partnership with local councils and approved/funded by NIEA.

1.2.8 RTRO - The Road Traffic Regulation (Northern Ireland) Order 1997.

1.2.9 Total cost - the combined cost of the design, purchase, and where applicable, erection of a sign, route marker post or sign post.

1.2.10 TSR - The Traffic Signs Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997.

1.2.11 Route Marker Post - a post used to indicate a change of direction on a walking route (see Appendix C diagram viii.).

1.3 **Background**

1.3.1 NIEA has a statutory duty to consider the approval of any proposed long distance rural recreational walking route. CAAN will also accredit recreational walking routes, of any length, which comply with quality assurance criteria. As part of these processes, NIEA and CAAN consult with any other agency considered appropriate.

1.3.2 CAAN is developing a series of walking routes known as Waymarked Ways. NIEA is also now co-ordinating improvements to the Ulster Way. These routes will mostly be off-road, however in some instances on-road sections will be unavoidable and these sections will require directional signing.

1.3.3 The Department is responsible for all traffic signing in Northern Ireland. Articles 28 - 31 of RTRO provides the Department with the power to prescribe, authorise, provide or consent to the erection of traffic signs.

1.4 **Costs and Benefits**

1.4.1 The applicant for signing is responsible for bearing the total cost of all signs provided and any signing that needs replaced. The applicant shall be required to enter into an agreement with the Department based on the applicable terms and conditions for the provision of permanent signs as detailed in Appendix A. The applicant must also ensure that a sponsoring authority, such as a district council or other government body, has underwritten this agreement.

1.4.2 The anticipated benefits from the implementation of this RSPPG will be a co-ordinated and quality approach to the signing of walking routes, which will aid the development of these as tourism products.

2 Roads Service Policy & Procedure

2.1 General principles

2.1.1 This document should be read in conjunction with the following Roads Service documents:

- a) Roads Service Policy and Procedure Guide: RSPPG_E029 “The Signing of Tourist Attractions and Facilities” joint Roads Service/NITB Signing Policy (RSPPG_E029), April 2004; and,
- b) Roads Service Policy and Procedure Guide: RSPPG_E034 “Direction Signs” Roads Service, December 2004.

2.2 Criteria

2.2.1 Only routes approved by NIEA will be provided with signing on public roads.

2.2.2 Before Roads Service will consider the signing of any route it must be in receipt of the following documentation, which shall be provided by the applicant:

- Written confirmation of approval/accreditation for the route from NIEA/CAAN;
- The completed and signed agreement (Appendix A); and,
- Written confirmation that a sponsoring authority e.g. District Council or other government body has underwritten the agreement.

2.2.3 Routes should generally be of a rural nature and away from main roads and other areas that attract high volumes of vehicular traffic. The use of A class roads should be avoided unless designated walking facilities have been provided or are planned as part of the route.

2.2.4 The safety of walkers and all other road users shall be of primary importance. Consequently approval/accreditation will not confer automatic entitlement to signing, the final decision as to whether signing is provided for a route or not will be made by Roads Service.

2.3 Parking

2.3.1 The applicant should provide evidence that appropriate parking has been provided on the route. Under Article 45 of the Access to the Countryside (Northern Ireland) Order 1983, district councils have powers to provide parking places, and to exercise compulsory purchase powers for this purpose.

2.3.2 Where possible routes should start at car parks. Where a route starts on a public road, adequate car parking shall be provided.

2.3.3 Article 13 of the Road Traffic Regulation Order (NI) 1997 makes provision for the making of an order to allow the use of part of an off-street parking place for displaying information to the public. This provision can be used to permit the erection of panels relating to recreational routes. As no similar provision exists for the erection of such signs on the public road they will not be permitted. Furthermore information panels shall not be permitted in any other location deemed unsuitable by Roads Service.

2.4 **Signing**

2.4.1 Signing shall be of the size and colour as authorised by the Department. Details of these are located in Appendix C. The colours to be used are Golden Yellow 356, Aircraft Blue 108, Cherry 538 and Brilliant Green 221 as specified in BS381C.

2.4.2 The colours represent the distance of the walk i.e. Green - 5 miles or less (short); Red - over 5 miles and up to 20 miles (medium); and Blue - over 20 miles (long).

2.4.3 Only routes that encourage walkers to join or leave routes at safe locations shall be signed.

2.4.4 Routes may be signed in both directions.

2.4.5 Signing should be kept to a minimum consistent with safety and the need to ensure clear directions. A full schedule of proposed signs shall be provided for Roads Service approval. The proforma in Appendix B should be used.

2.4.6 Fingerpost signing shall normally only be used to indicate where routes leave the public road network. In areas deemed by NIEA to be environmentally sensitive route marker posts may be used as an alternative. Signing examples are shown in diagrams (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) in Appendix C.

2.4.7 Route-confirmation signing on route marker posts shall be provided at changes of direction along a route. This signing shall comprise:

- the appropriate route identification fern disc (diagram v. in Appendix C); and,
- the yellow direction arrow disc (diagram vi. in Appendix C).

2.4.8 The route identification fern disc should be placed above the direction arrow disc (diagrams ix., x. and xi. in Appendix C).

2.4.9 The direction arrow disc shall only be orientated pointing left or right. Where two different length routes coincide only the shorter route is signed with a direction arrow disc (diagram x. in Appendix C).

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2.4.10 Route-confirmation signing shall be mounted on posts 120mm square x 1400mm high and finished in hardwood or larch, treated with 2 coats micropore stain (colour dark brown) or recycled high impact resistant compound plastic (diagram viii. in Appendix C).

2.4.11 One route marker post should be provided at each junction. The post shall be erected so that walkers walking on the right from either direction can see the relevant signs on the posts directly ahead of them. Only in exceptional circumstances should a second post be used and this will be largely dependent on the size and nature of the junction in question.

2.4.12 Posts should not encroach into junction sight-lines or grass mowing strips. If local circumstances allow, signs may be erected on walls or other appropriate street furniture with the consent of the owner.

2.4.13 As stated in paragraph 2.4.7, route marker posts shall be provided at changes of direction along a route. Exceptions can, however, be made to this general rule in urban areas where it is deemed by Roads Service that the conspicuity of the waymarker arrow is so compromised within the context of the urban setting, that a fingerpost sign may be more beneficial. In all cases care should be taken to avoid sign overload caused by the proliferation of signs.

2.4.14 The 'quality stamp' disc (showing the footprint) shall be provided, along with the route-confirmation signing, where an accredited quality walk formally starts and/or finishes. The 'quality stamp' disc (diagram vii. In Appendix C) shall be located below the direction arrow disc (diagram ix. in Appendix C). In this scenario the post shall be orientated so that the signing is parallel to the road edge.

2.5 Sign Erection

2.5.1 All signs shall be specified in Appendix B – approved schedule of proposed sign details.

2.5.2 Fingerpost signs (paragraph 2.4.6) shall be designed and supplied by Roads Service.

2.5.3 Route marker posts and discs (paragraphs 2.4.7 to 2.4.13) shall be supplied by CAAN.

2.5.4 Roads Service or the applicant (by agreement) will arrange the erection of all posts and signs.

2.5.5 Where the applicant erects the signs, in accordance with Article 29(3) of RTRO, they shall comply in all respects with the current specification contained in the Roads Service Signs Supply Contract as let by the Central Procurement Directorate and the terms and conditions set out in Appendix A.

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2.5.6 Where Roads Service incurs costs in relation to the design/supply and erection of direction signs and route marker posts, the total cost shall be recouped from the applicant.

2.5.7 Existing Ulster Way signing shall be removed in parallel with or before the erection of the new Ulster Way signing. NIEA/CAAN will provide a schedule for removal. The removal costs shall be met by NIEA.

3 Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

3.1 Equality Impact Assessment Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

3.1.1 An equality screening analysis has been carried out on the policy contained within this RSPPG. The analysis did not identify a differential impact on any of the groups listed in section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. A full equality impact assessment has consequently not been deemed necessary.

4 References

4.1 General References

4.1.1 [The Road Traffic Regulation \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1997.](#)

4.1.2 The Traffic Signs Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997.

4.1.3 Roads Service Policy and Procedure Guide: [RSPPG E029 “The Signing of Tourist Attractions and Facilities”](#) joint Roads Service / NITB Signing Policy published in April 2004

4.1.4 Roads Service Policy and Procedure Guide: [RSPPG E034 “Direction Signs”](#) Roads Service December 2004.

4.1.5 [The Access to the Countryside \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1983.](#)

5 Appendices

5.1 Appendix A – Agreement of the terms and conditions for the provision and/or erection of permanent signs

(Paragraph's 4-8, 12 & 13 will only apply if the applicant erects the signs).

1. All sign faces shall conform to the Traffic Signs Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997 or otherwise authorised by the Department (Roads Service Headquarters).
2. All proposed signs shall be listed in the Schedule in Appendix B and shall have an x-height corresponding to Appendix A of Local Transport Note 1/94 (available from The Stationery Office).
3. The Applicant shall provide a map (of appropriate scale) marked with the location of all the signs listed in the Schedule in Appendix B.
4. The Applicant shall not vary the total number of signs referred to in the Schedule in Appendix B nor alter the siting of any sign without first having obtained the Department's consent in writing.
5. The Applicant shall be responsible for the proper erection of the signs listed in the Schedule in Appendix B in accordance with the Roads Service Term Contract for Street Lighting and Traffic Works or the current equivalent contract.
6. Where the upper extremity of the sign is more than 4m above ground level the sign, post and base will require certification under the Roads Service Technical Approval scheme, details of which can be obtained from Roads Service Divisional offices.
7. The Applicant shall be responsible for all costs in connection with the supply, erection of the signs.
8. The Applicant shall take all necessary measures to ensure that as little damage as possible is caused to grass verges and street furniture by reason of the erection of any sign and shall at its own expense forthwith make good any damage so caused.
9. The Applicant shall indemnify and at all times keep the Department, its officers and servants effectively indemnified against all actions, proceedings, costs, damages, claims and demands in respect of loss of life or personal injury or damage to property caused by reason of the erection or existence of the signs or arising in any manner from the use, inspection, repair, maintenance, alteration or removal of same for a period of one year from when work commenced on the erection of the signs. (£10,000,000 cover for any one incident, number of incidents unlimited).
10. Without prejudice to the generality of Clause 9, the Applicant shall effect public liability insurance for at least £10,000,000 (any one incident) with an Insurance

Company to be approved by the Department and shall produce to the Department the policy of such insurance, plus the receipt for the current premium each year for the period specified in Clause 9 and in the event of the Applicant failing to pay any premium the Department may do so and recover same from the Applicant.

11. The Department may at any time, if the Applicant does not fulfil its obligations under this Agreement, revoke this Agreement by giving to the Applicant one week's notice in writing of its intention to revoke.
12. The Applicant shall give the Department at least one calendar month's notice in writing of the date it intends to erect the signs.
13. In the event of any default by the Applicant the Department shall itself carry out all such works that are necessary in the interests of the safety and convenience of road users and the Applicant shall reimburse it in respect of all expenses arising therefrom as shall be certified by the Department.
14. The Applicant may at any time request the Department to revoke this Agreement by giving the Department one calendar month's notice in writing and upon the expiry of such notice the Department shall revoke this Agreement and the Applicant shall proceed and be liable in all respects as required of it by the preceding conditions.
15. The applicant should be aware that:
 - a) the signs shall become the property of the Department;
 - b) the signs shall be removed if the route becomes disused or neglected or it otherwise fails to meet the criteria against which approval was initially granted;
 - c) the applicant shall be responsible for the cost of replacing signs if they become damaged or require renewal due to normal wear and tear;
 - d) Roads Service will carry out normal sign maintenance, but should the signs be severely damaged, become unsightly or constitute a road safety hazard, they will be removed from the site;
 - e) if Roads Service can recover the cost of damage from a third party, the signs will be replaced at no cost to the applicant - otherwise the applicant will be required to meet the cost of a replacement sign;
 - f) unauthorised signing of the route must be removed before the introduction of authorised direction signs will be considered;
 - g) subsequent erection of unauthorised signs will result in the removal of authorised direction signs; and
 - h) signs shall not be illuminated or reflectorised.

16. Agreement details to be completed by the Applicant:

Route Name: _____

I _____ (signature) on behalf of _____
agree to the applicable terms and conditions in relation to the signing of the above
named route.

Name (printed): _____

Position: _____

Address: _____

Email address: _____

Telephone No: _____

Date: _____

5.2 Appendix B – approved schedule of proposed sign details

Sign ref	Legend	Location	Estimated traffic speed (85th percentile)	x-height	Height	Width	No of posts & size

5.3 **Appendix C** –



(i) Direction along the Ulster Way and a long distance walking route.



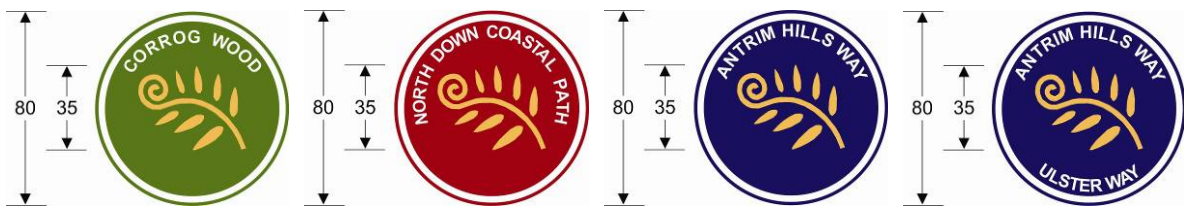
(ii) Direction along a long distance walking route.



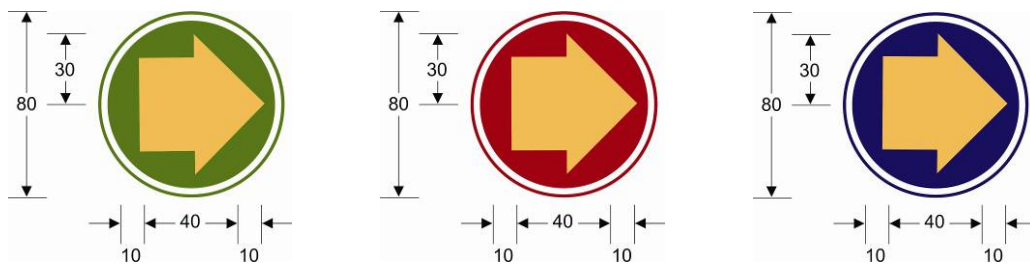
(iii) Direction along a medium distance walking route.



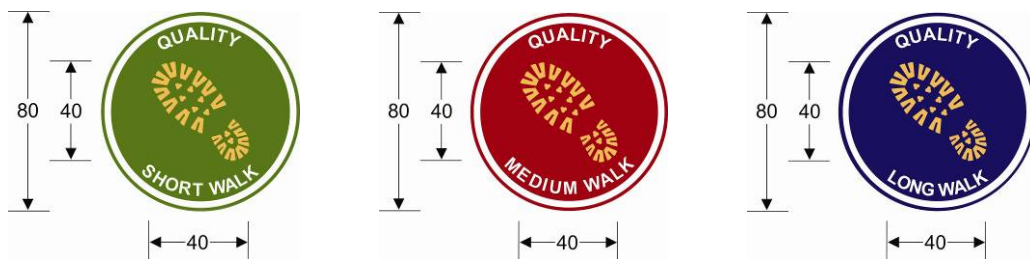
(iv) Direction along a short distance walking route.



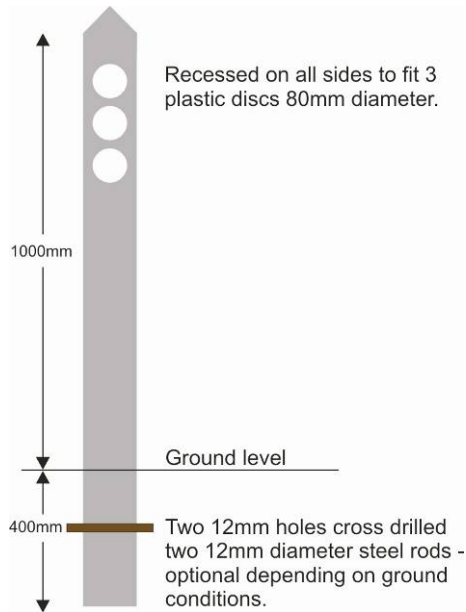
(v) Route identification of a short, medium and long distance walking route.



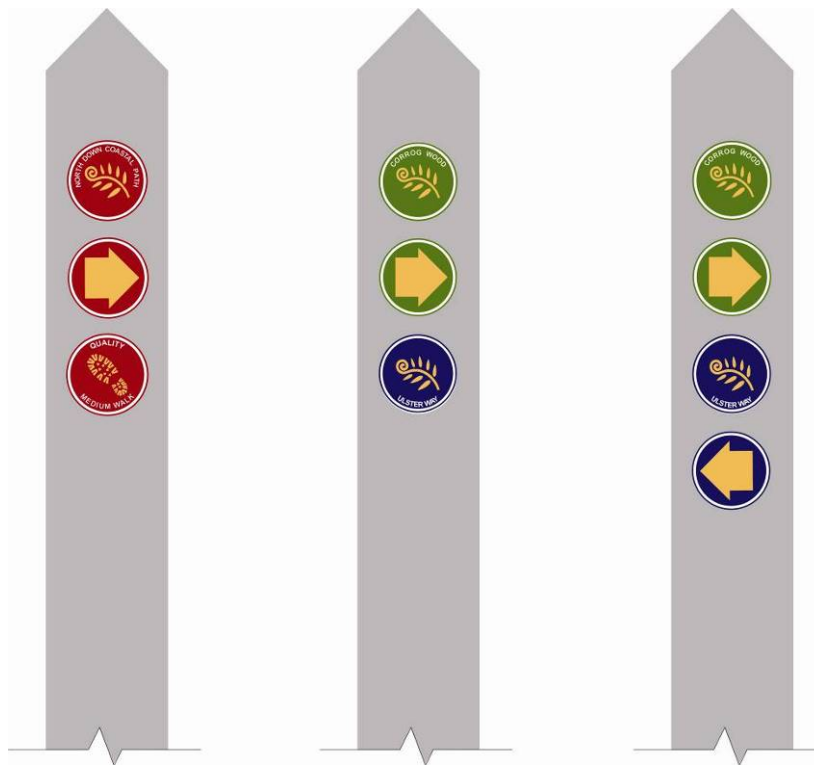
(vi) Change of direction on a short, medium and long distance walking route.



(vii) 'Quality Stamp' indicating the start or finish of a short, medium and long distance quality walking route.



(viii) Route marker post specification.



(ix) Signing of the start of a medium distance quality walking route.

(x) Signing of a short distance walking route which is also part of the Ulster Way.

(xi) Signing of a short distance walking route / Ulster Way where there is a change in direction.

6 Control Sheet - Roads Service Policy & Procedure Guide :

Title: RSPPG_E044: Signing of Approved Rural Recreational Walking Routes on Public Roads

6.1 Document History

Version	Date	Author	Authorised by Document Control Panel Members Name : Signature
1	June 2008	S Hughes	T. Fulton M. Hackett N. Chambers R. Nicholson H. Hamilton
2	March 2009	S Hughes	T. Fulton D. McFarlane N. Chambers R. Nicholson H. Hamilton

6.2 Overall Reasons For This Version

Version	Reasons
1	First issue of this RSPPG.
2	Fingerpost signing now permitted in certain urban areas and waymarker posts now permitted in areas deemed environmentally sensitive. EHS also changed to NIEA.

6.3 Revision Details

Version	Amendments