**Section 542.600 Application, Fees, and Other Regulations**

a) Application

1) As a freeway route is scheduled to have business logo signs displayed for the first time, the Department will publish in local newspapers a notice soliciting participation from businesses offering gas, food, lodging, camping, and a 24-hour pharmacy along that freeway.

2) Application forms will be available from the Department (see Appendix B – District Offices and Counties for a listing of District addresses and phone numbers) for all businesses that could qualify to have business signs displayed on specific service panels. If a business wishes to participate in this program, it must complete an application form for each specific service for which it wishes to sign and submit it to the Department by the deadline date indicated in the newspaper notice. Applications received after the indicated date will be considered if space is still available on the freeway panels.

3) Where the Department determines from the initial application that the business meets the criteria listed in this Part and space is available, the application will be approved and returned to the business along with instructions concerning the number and location of the business signs, the annual fee, and other appropriate information.

b) Fees

1) A $100 processing fee for each type of service signing requested by a business establishment must be submitted to the Department at the time the sign design is submitted for approval, as required by Section 542.500(c)(3). A $100 processing fee will also be charged when a business reapplies for signing after its signs have been removed due to late rental payments, withdrawal from the program, or a business changing its name and its ownership at the same time, or for removal of Level 2 signs after 5 years of installation, as required under Section 542.400(d)(7).

2) An annual rental fee sufficient to offset the cost of this program will be charged for each business sign displayed on a freeway panel, exit ramp panel, and trailblazer assembly. The annual rental fees as of July 1, 2006 will be $200 for each business sign displayed on a freeway panel, $130 for each business sign displayed on an exit ramp panel, and $30 for each business sign displayed on a trailblazer assembly. The Department will periodically adjust the fees to reflect the current cost of maintaining the signing system. Fee adjustments are subject to rulemaking. Fees will be collected on an annual basis. When a business establishment makes an annual payment, it will be guaranteed usage of the paid space on the specific service panel for the entire year, as long as it meets the established criteria. Any business closing or withdrawing from the program after making its annual payment will not be given a refund. A prorated fee will be charged for signs erected for a partial year.

3) Where payment is not received by the Department within 30 calendar days after the due date, the business signs will be removed by the Department. Where receipt of payment is delinquent and a specific service panel is full, the business establishment will lose its signing priority to the next qualifying business desiring the space. When the fee is received after the business sign is removed, and space is still available on the panel, a fee of $100 will be charged for reapplication as provided for in subsection (b)(1), in addition to the annual fee for the remainder of the fiscal year, as well as that portion of the annual fee owed for the period of time between the end of the preceding fiscal year and the date the sign was removed.

4) A fee of $50 for each business sign will be charged for a business requesting that its signs be replaced with new signs for any reason other than due to damage or vandalism as provided for in subsection (c)(1) of this Section. Where such replacement is requested, all business signs for the specific business, including those on freeway and exit ramp panels, as well as any trailblazer signs, must be replaced at the same time.

c) Placing and Maintaining Business Signs

1) Businesses, at their expense, must supply their own business signs to the Department within 60 calendar days after approval of their design. If the signs are not received by the Department within the 60 calendar day time period, the space will be declared available. Only the Department will place, or cause to be placed, the business signs on the specific service panels and trailblazer assemblies.

2) When a business sign is so deteriorated, damaged or vandalized that it needs replacement, the Department will notify its owner by certified mail to resubmit a logo design within 30 days after the notification. The Department reserves the right to make the final determination of whether a business sign needs to be replaced. Once the logo design is approved, the owner must supply the Department with the replacement sign within 60 days after the logo design approval. There will be a fee of $50 for each sign replaced due to deterioration that has been installed less than 10 years. There will be no charge for the replacement of a business sign that has been damaged or vandalized. If a logo design is not received within the 30 day time period or a replacement sign is not received within the 60 day time period, the Department will remove all of the owner's business signs at the interchange and the business will lose its signing priority.

3) Businesses will be required to certify on the application that they meet the established criteria. When the Department receives a complaint that a business may not comply, the suspected business will be contacted by the Department to determine if it meets the established criteria. If it is determined the business establishment fails to qualify, the business must change its operation within 30 calendar days after notification by the Department so as to comply or its business logos will be removed.

(Source: Amended at 35 Ill. Reg. 18905, effective October 26, 2011)