

North Carolina Department of Transportation

Special Event Guidelines

July 25, 2014

The following guidelines apply to all special events (including, but not limited to, parades, festivals, bicycle rides or races, marathons, 5K walks/runs, concerts, etc.) being held on highways under the jurisdiction of the North Carolina Department of Transportation that involve a road closure, lane closure, or repurpose the highway (travel lanes or shoulders) for something other than their intended use. However, the following are not eligible for special events under these guidelines:

- State Highway System roads that have full access control
- Bridges that have limited alternative routes
- Segments of State Highway System roads with bridges that have limited alternative routes

I. Special Events held by Counties and/or Municipalities, or Sponsored by Counties and/or Municipalities (“Special Events Request Form” not required)

The North Carolina Department of Transportation is only reviewing for conflicts and concerns, and is neither approving nor denying these events.

- Counties and/or municipalities may approve the use of a highway or highways within their jurisdiction by processions, assemblages, or anything that may be construed as a procession or assemblage, in accordance with [§20-169](#). For bicycle races, see [§20-171.2](#) for additional information.
- Counties and/or municipalities should consult with their local Highway Division or District office to verify that the proposed special event will not (1) interfere with other planned special events and (2) impact, or be impacted by, planned maintenance or other activities. No other action by the North Carolina Department of Transportation shall be necessary.
- Counties and/or municipalities shall pass an ordinance approving or the special event, and place signs giving notice of the special event, in accordance with [§20-169](#). This ordinance is evidence that the county and/or municipality accept full responsibility for, and all liability related to, the special event. A copy of the ordinance should be forwarded to the local Highway Division office for their records. For bicycle races, see [§20-171.2](#) for additional information.
- The North Carolina Department of Transportation considers these events official actions of the county and/or municipality and they will be responsible for safety, traffic flow, traffic control, appropriate signing, and ensuring that all debris, litter, decorations, and other items associated with the event are removed following the event.

II. Special Events held by Non-Government Entities not Sponsored by Counties and/or Municipalities (“Special Events Request Form” required)

- Non-government entities desiring to hold a special event shall submit a formal request to the local Highway Division office where the event is planned.
- Non-government entities shall attach a completed “Special Events Request Form” to their formal request(s). The purpose of the form is to primarily collect information on the event itself and identify the responsible parties.

III. Examples (not all inclusive)

A. Bicycle Ride

- A non-government sponsored road rally is planned to ride bicycles between New Bern and Morehead City.
- The special events form is not required because the ride is not changing the use of the highway and the expectation is that the riders will follow the rules of the road and obey all traffic control devices.
- However, if there is an expectation that the event would re-purpose or close any part of the highway, including shoulders, then the form would be required.
- An example of re-purposing the highway would be to have hydration stations on the shoulder at regular intervals to provide water and sports drinks to the riders.

B. Municipal Christmas Parade

- A Christmas parade is planned by a municipality for a section of US 99 (Main Street).
- The "Special Events Request Form" is not required.
- However, the municipality shall consult with the local Highway Division notifying the Division of the date, times, and locations.
- After receiving notification from the Division that there are no known conflicts, the municipality shall pass an ordinance in accordance with [§20-169](#), place signs, and provide a copy of the ordinance to the Division.

C. Municipal Sponsored Festival

- A municipality is sponsoring a festival for a section of US 99 (Main Street) and several other adjoining secondary roads.
- The "Special Events Request Form" is not required.
- However, the municipality shall consult with the local Highway Division notifying the Division of the date, times, and locations.
- After receiving notification from the Division that there are no known conflicts, the municipality shall pass an ordinance in accordance with [§20-169](#), place signs, and provide a copy of the ordinance to the Division.

D. Local Club Triathlon

- A local club wants to close a portion of Lake Street (SR 9988) to hold a triathlon and have hydration stations on the shoulder at regular intervals to provide water and sports drinks.
- The "Special Events Request Form" is required identifying all State Highway System facilities affected by the event.

E. Bicycle Race

- A local club wants to close a portion of several State Highway System facilities to hold a bicycle race and does not expect racers to obey traffic control devices.
- The "Special Events Request Form" is required identifying all State Highway System facilities affected by the event.
- The local club must also follow all safety, traffic flow, and traffic control requirements in accordance with [§20-171.2](#).

§ 20-169. Powers of local authorities.

Local authorities, except as expressly authorized by G.S. 20-141 and 20-158, shall have no power or authority to alter any speed limitations declared in this Article or to enact or enforce any rules or regulations contrary to the provisions of this Article, except that local authorities shall have power to provide by ordinances for any of the following:

- (1) Regulating traffic by means of traffic or semaphores or other signaling devices on any portion of the highway where traffic is heavy or continuous.
- (2) Prohibiting other than one-way traffic upon certain highways.
- (3) Regulating the use of the highways by processions or assemblages.
- (4) Regulating the speed of vehicles on highways in public parks.
- (5) Authorizing law enforcement or fire department vehicles, ambulances, and rescue squad emergency service vehicles, equipped with a siren to preempt any traffic signals upon city streets within local authority boundaries or, with the approval of the Department of Transportation, on State highways within the boundaries of local authorities. The Department of Transportation shall respond to requests for approval within 60 days of receipt of a request.

Signs shall be erected giving notices of the special limits and regulations under subdivisions (1) through (4) of this section. (1937, c. 407, s. 131; 1949, c. 947, s. 2; 1955, c. 384, s. 2; 1963, c. 559; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; 1979, c. 298, s. 2; 1991, c. 530, s. 5; 1999-310, s. 1.)

§ 20-171.2. Bicycle racing.

(a) Bicycle racing on the highways is prohibited except as authorized in this section.

(b) Bicycle racing on a highway shall not be unlawful when a racing event has been approved by State or local authorities on any highway under their respective jurisdictions. Approval of bicycle highway racing events shall be granted only under conditions which assure reasonable safety for all race participants, spectators and other highway users, and which prevent unreasonable interference with traffic flow which would seriously inconvenience other highway users.

(c) By agreement with the approving authority, participants in an approved bicycle highway racing event may be exempted from compliance with any traffic laws otherwise applicable thereto, provided that traffic control is adequate to assure the safety of all highway users. (1977, c. 1123, s. 1.)