



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ACT MEMO

2017 Wisconsin Act 232
[2017 Assembly Bill 716]

Municipal Welcome Signs

Generally, state law prohibits signs from being placed within the limits of any street or highway except as necessary for the guidance or warning of traffic, subject to certain exceptions. Signs used to regulate, warn, or guide traffic are considered traffic control devices, which must generally comply with the manual adopted by the Department of Transportation that establishes a uniform system of traffic control devices, which is substantially based on the national standards for traffic control devices.

2017 Wisconsin Act 232 allows a municipality to erect and maintain a municipal welcome sign within the right-of-way of any highway, except interstate highways, within a municipality's boundaries. Under the Act, a "municipal welcome sign" is defined as an official sign erected and maintained by a municipality that the municipality determines is necessary to inform motorists of the territorial boundaries of the municipality. The Act specifies that a municipal welcome sign is not a traffic control device and is therefore not subject to the Wisconsin manual on traffic control devices.

Also, state law generally provides that no sign visible from the main-traveled way of any interstate or federal-aid highway may be erected or maintained, unless one of several exceptions apply. "Directional and other official signs" are one of these exceptions. Under the Act, municipal welcome signs are considered a type of directional and other official sign.

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This memo provides a brief description of the Act. For more detailed information, consult the text of the law and related legislative documents at the Legislature's Web site at: <http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov>.