



**ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY**

## Adopt-A-Highway Sponsor FAQs

### Who Administers the Adopt-A-Highway Program?

The Adopt-A-Highway (AAH) Program is solely administered by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

### What is the Difference Between an Adopt-A-Highway Volunteer and an Adopt-A-Highway Sponsor?

An adopter has the option to use its own forces to perform adoption tasks or to hire a contractor to perform adoption tasks on its behalf. The first arrangement is considered a “volunteer adoption;” the second is considered a “sponsored adoption.” In a sponsored adoption, both the sponsor and its contractor receive an AAH Encroachment Permit (Permit). The sponsor’s Permit is considered the “parent” Permit. The contractor’s Permit is considered a “double” Permit and is completely dependant on the existence of a corresponding parent Permit.

### What is an Adopt-A-Highway Contractor and How Do I Locate One?

An AAH service contractor is an independent business that has met Caltrans’ license and insurance requirements. In addition, an AAH service contractor must conform to all laws and regulations concerning business and professional licensing, workers’ compensation insurance, and fair employment practices. A list of contractors who have met these requirements is available from AAH coordinators. A sponsor is responsible for obtaining and discontinuing the services of a contractor. A sponsor may obtain bids from more than one contractor. The AAH service contractor will prepare a contract covering the work to be provided, which a sponsor should carefully read before signing. All funds paid to a contractor remain with the contractor.

### What is the Relationship between Contractors, Sponsors, and Caltrans?

Caltrans has no involvement in the contract established between a sponsor and its hired contractor. A contractor may prepare and submit paperwork associated with an adoption on behalf of its sponsor, or, the sponsor may work directly with an AAH coordinator to establish an adoption. Caltrans may contact a sponsor, or a sponsor may contact Caltrans, at any time during the adoption process or Permit period, even if the contractor submitted AAH paperwork on its sponsor’s behalf.

### Is a Fee Charged to Participate in the AAH Program?

Caltrans does not charge a fee to apply to, or to participate in, the AAH Program. If an AAH contractor prepares and submits AAH paperwork on its sponsor’s behalf, the contractor might charge for these services.

Contractors are supplied with AAH litter bags free of charge. (Volunteer adopters are provided with AAH litter bags and safety gear.) Caltrans collects and disposes of filled AAH litter bags and other debris cleared from the adoption site free of charge. However, planting or graffiti removal adopters must provide materials and equipment at their own cost.

### Is a Fee Charged for AAH Signs?

An AAH courtesy sign consists of a base sign and a recognition panel “overlay.” The recognition panel displays the adopter’s name and is attached to the base sign. Caltrans does not charge a fee for manufacturing and installing a base sign or for attaching a recognition panel to a base sign. Caltrans also does not charge a fee



for manufacturing a “standard” recognition panel - one with plain black lettering. An adopter may provide to Caltrans adhesive-backed logos or colored lettering at its own cost. Caltrans does not charge a fee for mounting supplied artwork onto a recognition panel. Caltrans supplies blank recognition panels to contractors (and volunteer adopters) free of charge.

A contractor may offer to design, manufacture, and deliver its sponsor’s recognition panel to Caltrans. If authorized to do so on its Permit, a contractor may also attach the recognition panel onto a base sign. A contractor will charge its sponsor for these services.

A recognition panel’s design must be approved by an AAH coordinator before it can be installed. For information on what may be displayed on an AAH recognition panel, please obtain the “Ordering Signs” documents from the AAH Internet site: <http://adopt-a-highway.dot.ca.gov/ordering.htm>.

### **Does My Contractor Have to Work if My Recognition Panel is Not Installed?**

Yes. AAH work is not contingent on the installation of a recognition panel. A contractor must attend a safety orientation and begin work within 30 days of the start date on its Permit, regardless of whether or not the sponsor’s recognition panel has been installed. In addition, work must continue throughout the Permit period, even if a panel is damaged, stolen, or a sign is knocked down.

### **What Happens if I Cancel My Permit?**

Permits are issued for a period of five years. A sponsor may convert to a volunteer adoption, cancel its adoption, or change contractors at any time without consequence or fee from Caltrans. If any of these changes occur, the existing contractor’s Permit is no longer valid and Caltrans will cancel it.

However, it is important to note that changing a Permit arrangement with Caltrans does not negate the contract obligation established between a sponsor and its contractor. A sponsor is advised to carefully examine the terms of its contract with its contractor prior to making any change. Permit provisions establish that it is the sponsor’s responsibility to notify Caltrans of any such change.

### **What Happens if My Contractor Cancels Its Permit?**

If a contractor voluntarily cancels its Permit, the sponsor’s Permit is still valid. The AAH coordinator will give the sponsor a deadline of no more than 30 calendar days to decide whether to cancel its own Permit, hire a new contractor, or convert to a volunteer adoption.

### **Who Provides Adopt-A-Highway Program Quality Assurance?**

Even though Caltrans has no involvement in the contract established between a sponsor and its contractor, Caltrans has the authority to enforce AAH Program Regulations and Permit provisions. Caltrans monitors a contractor’s performance for work quality and safety. If a minor infraction occurs, Caltrans will warn the contractor directly. However, if minor infractions continue or a more serious infraction occurs, Caltrans will issue a warning notice. A warning notice is sent to the sponsor and a copy is sent to its contractor. A contractor’s Permit will be revoked if a third warning notice is necessary. If a contractor (or one of its employees) acts with a deliberate disregard for their own safety, the safety of Caltrans employees, or the safety of the traveling public, the contractor’s Permit will be immediately revoked.

### **What Happens if My Contractor’s Permit is Revoked?**

If a contractor’s Permit is revoked, the contractor may no longer work at the adoption site. A contractor has the right to appeal the revocation. The sponsor’s Permit remains valid and the adoption site is held until the appeal deadline has passed or, if an appeal is submitted, until the appeal process has been completed. During this time, Caltrans is responsible for maintenance activities at the site.

If the contractor does not appeal, or if the revocation is upheld in spite of the appeal, the AAH coordinator will give the sponsor a deadline of no more than 30 calendar days to decide whether to cancel its own Permit, hire a new contractor, or convert to a volunteer adoption. If the contractor does appeal and the revocation is reversed, then the contractor’s Permit will be reinstated and the adoption will continue for the duration of the Permit period.

To obtain more information regarding the AAH Program, please visit AAH Internet site: <http://adopt-a-highway.dot.ca.gov> or call your District AAH Coordinator at 1-866-ADOPTAHWY (1-866-236-7824).