

South Dakota Department of Transportation

Policy Title:	Fatal Crash Markers		
Policy Number:	DOT-OS-OT-6.1	Effective Date:	06/01/2021
Next Review Date:	06/01/2026	Policy Year Cycle:	5
Policy Owner:	Operations Traffic	Supersedes	DOT-OS-OT-6.0, S-4-89, OT-01-88

Policy

The South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) erects fatal crash markers (also known as Think signs) at State Highway System locations where fatal crashes have occurred since January 1, 1979. SDDOT furnishes Fatal Crash Markers to be placed by local governments on their roads. The SDDOT will remove Fatal Crash Markers installed on the State Highway System if any family member of a crash victim objects.

Persons Affected

Division of Operations

Purpose

To outline the SDDOT policy for fatal crash markers erected by the SDDOT at locations where fatal crashes have occurred since January 1, 1979.

Procedure


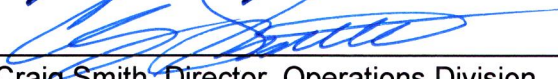

- I. **Determining Fatal Crash Marker Locations**
 - A. After receiving notice of a fatal crash location from the Department of Public Safety's Accident Records Office, the **Region Traffic Engineer** begins the process of installing a Fatal Crash Marker on the State Highway System at the location where the fatality occurred.
 - B. For fatal crashes occurring on county roads, notice of a fatal crash is sent by the Department of Public Safety's Accident Records Office to the County Highway Superintendent and the Region Traffic Engineer. The **Region Traffic Engineer** will provide a Think sign to the appropriate local government upon request.
 - a. Not all counties participate in the program. Some non-participating counties will not install Fatal Crash Markers at all, where others will only install them upon request from the family. Any requests for Fatal Crash Markers on a County highway should be sent to the appropriate County Highway Superintendent.
 - b. **NON-PARTICIPATING COUNTIES:** Aurora, Bennett, Brown, Brule, Clark, Clay, Corson, Faulk, Haakon, Hamlin, Hughes, Hutchinson, Jackson, Pennington, Perkins, Roberts, Spink, Union, Custer State Park.
 - C. For fatal crashes occurring on city streets, notice of a fatal crash is sent by the Department of Public Safety's Accident Records Office to the Region Traffic Engineer. The **Region Traffic Engineer** forwards the notice to the appropriate City Agency.

- a. Not all cities participate in the program. Some non-participating cities will not install Fatal Crash Markers at all, where others will only install them upon request from the family. Any requests for Fatal Crash Markers on local roads within a community should be sent to the appropriate City Agency.
 - b. NON-PARTICIPATING CITIES OR TOWNS: Aberdeen, Belle Fourche, Brookings, Huron, Lead, Madison, Rapid City, Spearfish, Sturgis, Vermillion, Watertown, Webster, Yankton.
- D. The **Region Traffic Engineer** will return the postcard that is sent with the notice of a fatal crash to the Accident Records Office after the marker has been installed.
- E. Requests may come in for installation of a Fatal Crash Marker for a crash that occurred in the past. These should come from an immediate family member and should be forwarded to the appropriate **Region Traffic Engineer** to coordinate installation of the marker.
- a. Fatal Crash Markers will not be installed on the state highway system for crashes that occurred before January 1, 1979.

II. **Erecting, Maintaining, Removing, or Replacing Fatal Crash Markers on the State Highway System**

- A. The **Highway Maintenance Supervisor**:
1. Erects Fatal Crash Markers one foot inside the right of way, as close as practical to the location of the crash.
 - a. At locations with multiple fatalities, place one marker for each person killed. Fatal Crash Markers should be parallel with the right of way line at intervals of approximately 10 feet.
 - b. The Fatal Crash Marker location may be adjusted if roadway geometrics or other conditions prevent installation at the actual crash site. Minor adjustments may be made for visibility of the marker from at least one direction of travel where steep inslopes or other conditions are present. Such markers must still be located outside the clear zone and at a distance greater than the deflection amount behind barriers.
 2. Notify the Region Traffic Engineer that a Fatal Crash Marker has been installed for a specific fatality on the State Highway System.
 3. Expedite removal of the marker if an immediate family member of the crash victim objects.
 4. Leave other Fatal Crash Markers in place until they are no longer in satisfactory condition because of sign face damage or deterioration.
 5. Take the Fatal Crash Marker down when it is in unsatisfactory condition.
 6. Take all Fatal Crash Markers down, regardless of condition, when the section of highway is reconstructed to new standards.
 7. Do not replace removed Fatal Crash Markers unless requested to do so by a family member. [This includes any that are missing because of unauthorized removal.]

Signatures

 _____ Joel Jundt, Secretary of Transportation	<u>9-27-21</u> Date
 _____ Craig Smith, Director, Operations Division	<u>9/21/2021</u> Date
 _____ Anthony Ondricek, Construction and Maintenance Engineer	<u>9/9/2021</u> Date