

Adopt a Highway Guidelines: A step-by-step approach

From: The National Khidmat-e-Khalq Office

To: All Qaideen

Vision: By adopting a segment of the highway, we attempt to give something back to the community we live in. Cleaner highways will be safer for the travelers. Majlis Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyyah U.S.A actively takes part in this initiative and our goal is to adopt a highway in every Majlis around the nation.

State -wise links to Adopt-a-Highway (AAH) websites:

Note: If you don't find the link for your Majlis try to search for your State's Department of Transportation and their Adopt a Highway program

Illinois-www.dot.state.il.us, or call (217)782-7820

New York- <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/permits/adopthwy.shtml>

Boston: <http://www.mhd.state.ma.us/default.asp?pgid=content/aah&sid=about>

Connecticut- <http://www.ct.gov/dot/cwp/view.asp?A=2094&Q=259944>

St. Paul MN-<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/adopt/>

Rochester:NY- <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/permits/adopthwy.shtml>

Ohio: <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/maintadmin/Adopt%20A%20Highway/aah.htm>

Michigan-http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-9621_11041_14408---,00.html

Indiana-<http://www.in.gov/indot/3845.htm>

Atlanta-<http://www.dot.state.ga.us/dot/operations/maintenance/adopt/forms.shtml>

Saint Louis-<http://www.co.st-louis.mo.us/hwyweb/adoptroad.html>

Maryland MD-<http://www.sha.state.md.us/oc/adopt.htm>

Austin TX-http://www.npsot.org/TXDOT_Contacts.htm

Houston TX-<http://www.dontmesswithtexas.org/adopt.php>

Virginia-<http://www.virginiadot.org/programs/prog-aah-default.asp>

Florida-<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/publicinformationoffice/moreDOT/adopt.htm>

New Orleans-http://www.dotd.louisiana.gov/programs_grants/adopt/adopt_a_road.asp

Seattle WA-<http://members.tripod.com/tnusawa/1/adptahwy.htm>

RTPNC-http://www.ncdot.org/doh/operations/dp_chief_eng/roadside/Beautification/highway/

Portland OR-<http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/OOM/Adopt/aHwy.shtml>

California-<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/maint/adopt/>

Phoenix Tucson, AZ-<http://www.azdot.gov/Highways/AdoptAHwy/Index.asp>

Getting Started:

1. One person can complete the process/paper work of this project. A team of at least 4 members is desirable for future maintenance.
2. Adopting groups agree to pick up litter on both sides of the roadway at least four times a year. This is minuscule amount of work considering the degree of waqar-e-amal and volunteering that Khudaam ul Ahmadiyya are normally used to!

The Process:

1. Contact your local department of transportation (DOT). They have a specific person assigned who is normally coordinator of Adopt-a-Highway program.
2. Introduce your local chapter and the worldwide scope of Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. Express your interest in adopting a highway.
3. In most cases, the person in charge will ask you a few preliminary questions and then fax you a list of available highway spots in the area of your interest.
4. While it is desirable that your adopted highway should be close to the masjid, this should not preclude you from looking at other possibilities. Your selection of the highway spot should be dependent upon various factors, such as: location, accessibility to khudaam, traffic load, proximity to a traffic light, local needs and overall impact from a khidmat (service) standpoint etc.
5. Once you select a highway spot, the next step will be to set up a time to meet the personnel at the local DOT office.
6. "Ahmadiyya Muslim Community" is the suggested name of the group for your road sign.
7. DOT will require you to sign the agreement and may ask you to view the highway safety videotape as well.
8. DOT will provide you with trash bags, safety vests, signs, video, caps etc. The khudaam contact person is responsible for ensuring that ANYONE who participates in a pickup under the Jamaat's permit has first received safety information, safety vest and trash bags.

Important Safety Rules:

1. Review and follow all the directions provided to you by your local DOT in written or verbal form.
2. Before you apply to adopt a particular highway, the khudaam contact person should examine the road on the days and during the hours that the group intends to perform pickups to determine if roadside conditions during those times are appropriate for the ages and abilities of the group's members.

Disclaimer:

The above-mentioned rules are broad guidelines that most DOTs adhere to. Specific rules in your state may vary. Please check your DOT website carefully and ask the local authorities to guide you in the process.

FAQs:

How Does It Work?

When a group adopts a highway, the local coordinator works with volunteers to select an available section of state-maintained highway. Each adopted section of highway is approximately two miles long. Volunteer groups sign agreements with the DOT to remove litter from their adopted sections of roadsides a minimum of three-six times each year.

How are roads assigned?

Requests for specific roadside areas are handled on a first-come, first-serve basis between you and a local DOT district coordinator.

Who provides the supplies?

The DOT provides safety training, safety vests, orange litterbags, recycling bags and gloves. DOT also removes the trash-filled bags from roadsides following a pickup.

How long is the contract with DOT?

A highway is adopted for a period of one to four years. You may keep adopted section of highway indefinitely if the agreement is renewed periodically and litter is collected on time.

How Do We Stay Safe?

Before collecting litter for the first time, all volunteers must receive adequate safety training. Local AAH Coordinators provide a safety video that every group member must view before participating in a cleanup.

Are there any age restrictions?

This varies from state to state. Generally, volunteers must be at least 12 years of age. Those between the ages of 12 and 17 must be supervised adequately by adults who are 21 years of age or older.

What should we wear during highway cleaning?

During cleanups, all volunteers must wear orange AAH safety vests provided by the DOT. Volunteers also should wear heavy work gloves, substantial shoes or boots and brightly colored clothing that covers the arms and legs.

How do I ensure safety of my team?

Volunteers must work facing oncoming traffic, keep off the roadway and stay at least five feet away from the edge of the road surface. Cleanup groups should work only along one side of the road at a time. Litter pickups must be scheduled for daylight hours and must be discontinued during inclement weather. Volunteers should avoid overexertion, watch their footing and stay clear of mowing operations, construction and maintenance work.

Watch for snakes, stinging insects and poisonous plants. To avoid injuries from broken and jagged objects, trash bags should not be overfilled or compacted.

How should we respond to hazardous material?

You should never pick up discarded syringes, needles or other hazardous objects. When these items are encountered, contact the local AAH Coordinator who will arrange safe removal of the material.

Where should we park?

Vehicles must be parked clear of the roadway and on the same side of the road where volunteers are working. Whenever possible, group members should carpool to the cleanup site to reduce the number of vehicles parked along the road.

What Wording May Be On AAH Signs? The DOT posts two signs, one at each end of the adopted section, with a group's name to acknowledge the group that has taken responsibility for cleaning the road. **"Ahmadiyya Muslim Community"** is the suggested name of the group for your road sign. Some states will give a certificate of participation to display in your masjid etc.

Is there a fee?

There is no fee required to participate in the Adopt-a-Highway program.

What Are Some Important Adopt-A-Highway Tips To Remember?

- watch the safety video before your first pickup
- wear safety vests and gloves (supplied by DOT)
- review safety rules before each pickup
- bundle the bags together and place them farther back from the road. (This makes picking up the bags safer and easier for DOT employees.)
- call the toll-free number to report your completed pickup and notify your local DOT maintenance yard to collect your trash-filled bags from the roadside
- call your local AAH coordinator when you have any questions about the AAH program.

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Action Requested:

Please give us your feedback so we can improve this document over time, Jazakummullah.