

Historical Marker Nomination Q&A

December 10, 2025



Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office
PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION

Deadlines

Deadline	Nomination Part	Anticipated staff turnaround
January 15, 11:59pm EST	Pre-Application via email	2 weeks
February 15, 11:59pm EST	Nomination draft via PA-SHARE	3 weeks
April 1, 11:59pm EST	Final nomination via PA-SHARE	Late September/early October

Pre-Application

****Optional
Strongly encouraged

Tips to complete:

- Specify research
- Include a couple scans of research
- Thoroughly search existing markers for similar themes

PHMC Historical Marker Pre-application

Contact Name:

Email:

Organization:

Proposed Marker Subject:

Date Pre-application is Submitted:

1. Please confirm you have read the criteria for approval. ☐Yes ☐No
2. Please confirm you have read the nomination guidelines. ☐Yes ☐No
3. What is the statewide, national, or international impact of this subject? (3-6 sentences)
4. How is the proposed marker subject substantially connected to Pennsylvania and its history?
5. Is the subject a religious building/property and/or cemetery/burial place? ☐Yes ☐No
6. Have any historical, cultural, or other organizations helped prepare the nomination and/or research? If yes, please list which ones.
☐Yes ☐No
7. Please summarize any primary and/or secondary sources already consulted. For information on what primary and secondary sources are, please see our Resources page.
8. Check our [marker search](#) to see whether the subject is already covered by another marker. If there are, please list those markers below. <https://share.phmc.pa.gov/markers/>
9. Any additional comments not covered in the previous questions.

Example Pre-Application

Marshalls Creek Explosion

3. What is the statewide, national, or international impact of this subject?

- On June 26, 1964, after blowing two tires, a dynamite truck traveling north on Milford Road (Rte 209) carrying the oxidizing ingredient in fertilizer pulled over in Marshalls Creek, Pa. Marshalls Creek Fire Company was called to the scene.
- The tires caught fire and the trailer exploded. The blast killed three volunteer firemen, three bystanders and injured 13 more and caused over a million dollars in damage. There were no markings on the truck indicating it was carrying explosives.
- The Marshalls Creek explosion became a textbook example of the dangers of hazardous materials on roadways. In the days that followed, testimonies were heard by congress, urging them to act to prevent another tragedy such as this. Local fire chiefs petitioned state and local representatives to have specific precautions designed to protect any volunteers from encountering a similar situation.
- The culmination of these and other efforts surrounding the event and others like it led to the enactment of the 1974 Transportation Safety Act (TSA).

4. How is the proposed marker subject substantially connected to PA and its history?

- The incident happened in Marshalls Creek, PA, and those affected petitioned PA representatives, who were instrumental in creating federal regulations.

Example Pre-Application

Marshalls Creek Explosion

7. Summarize any primary and/or secondary sources already consulted.

- Congressional Record of the House of Representatives State Representative Rooney (multiple)
- United States Senate, Public Safety Officers Memorial Scholarship Act, 1974. Testimony by The International Association of Fire Chiefs.
- Volunteer Firefighter Magazine. Big Blast at Marshalls Creek.
- Development of a Universal Emergency Action Guide System to Enhance Response Effectiveness and Safety, J.J. O'Driscoll, Transportation Research Board

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FEDERAL ROLE IN TRAFFIC SAFETY

was able to report to Congress that, in the face of a rising trend in vehicle-miles operated, a downward trend in the number of fatalities was continuing.

In anticipation of higher speeds, longer hauls, and heavier gross weights of commercial vehicles resulting from the National Highway Improvement Program, we are now reappraising our requirements for qualifications of drivers and our regulations relating to the transportation of dangerous articles.

Following investigation of the explosion of a tank vehicle loaded with propane near Pottsville, Pa., which resulted in the death of 11 persons, and the 1952 explosion of a similar vehicle in Berlin, New York, which killed 10 persons and caused great property damage, we revised our requirements for the design, fabrication, testing, and inspection of new tank vehicles used in the transportation of compressed gases.

The explosion of a trailer laden with dynamite and other blasting agents in June 1964 at Marshalls Creek, Pa., has indicated a need for more rigid requirements with respect to inspection of vehicles and tires, and more thorough instruction and examination of drivers.

Last year the Commission published its report on railroad-highway grade crossing accidents, following extensive hearings on the subject. Prevention of Rail-Highway Grade Crossing Accidents, 322 I.C.C. 1. Regulations designed to reduce to cost and frequency of such accidents are presently the subject of rule-making proceedings.

Documentation & Significance Worksheet

PHMC Historical Marker Program Historical Significance & Documentation Worksheet 2025

Marker Subject: Click or tap here to enter text.

Nominator: Click or tap here to enter text.

Point 1

Point of Significance: *1-3 sentences, no more than 100 words*

Click or tap here to enter text.

Source: *primary/secondary, author, title, date of publication, page number(s)*

Click or tap here to enter text.

How did you find this source? *For internet sources, provide URL and date accessed*

Click or tap here to enter text.

Point 2

Point of Significance: *1-3 sentences, no more than 100 words*

Click or tap here to enter text.

Source: *primary/secondary, author, title, date of publication, page number(s)*

Click or tap here to enter text.

How did you find this source? *For internet sources, provide URL and date accessed*

Click or tap here to enter text.

Example Significance & Documentation

Marshalls Creek Explosion

Point 1

Significance

On June 26, 1964, after blowing two tires, a dynamite truck traveling north on Milford Road (Rte 209) carrying the oxidizing ingredient in fertilizer pulled over in Marshalls Creek, Pa. The driver did not notice that the tires were fuming and went to find help at a nearby gas. While he was gone, a passing truck driver noticed the smoke and stopped to call the Marshalls Creek Fire Company at a payphone about 200 yards away. The firemen arrived just after 4:00 am and immediately started to fight the fire, which at this point engulfed the trailer. **Seconds later the trailer exploded.** The blast killed three volunteer firemen, three bystanders and injured 13 more and caused over a million dollars in damage. **There were no markings on the truck indicating it was carrying explosives.**

Sources

1. Aaron Applegate, Remembering the Marshalls Creek Blast: 2004 Article Tells Firefighters' Stories, Pocono Record, June 20, 2014
2. Volunteer Firefighter Magazine, Big Blast at Marshalls Creek, September 1964

Example Significance & Documentation

Marshalls Creek Explosion

Point 2

Significance

After the dust settled, the Marshalls Creek explosion became a textbook example of the dangers of hazardous materials on roadways. In the days that followed, testimonies were heard by congress, urging them to act to prevent another tragedy such as this. Rep. Rooney of Pennsylvania addressed the House of Representatives, **calling for laws that should be put in place**, including: Highly visible markings on trucks carrying explosives, vehicles carrying explosives cannot be left unattended at any time, vehicles carrying explosives over two tons need at least two people, Nitro-Carbo-Nitrate be classified as an explosive, and the quantity of explosives allowed to be transported be reduced considerably.

Sources

Congressional Record of the House of Representatives, State Representative Rooney, Tues., June 30, 1964 and Fri., Aug. 7, 1964

Example Significance & Documentation

Marshall's Creek Explosion

Point 3

Significance

In later decades, the 1964 explosion led to a “complete revamp of entire regulatory system (for transporting hazardous materials) from top to bottom,” said Al Roberts, who was the Interstate Commerce Commission’s lead investigator of the accident. Roberts, who went from the ICC to the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Office of Hazardous Materials, helped push through regulations requiring drivers transporting explosives to stay with their vehicles. **The culmination of these efforts led to the enactment of the TSA of 1974.**

Sources

Development of a Universal Emergency Action Guide System to Enhance Response Effectiveness and Safety., J.J. O’Driscoll, Transportation Research Board, 1986

Evaluation Rubric

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission 2025 Historical Marker Program Evaluation Sheet

Marker Title:

Applicant:

Municipality, County:

Documentation Partner:

Assign a score from 0 to 3 for each of the following categories: 0 = does not meet criteria, 1 = minimally meets criteria, 2= meets criteria, 3 = exceeds criteria. See the associated “Guidelines for Evaluation[[link](#)]” for more specific points to consider related to the broad questions below.

Required Criteria (A – C) (completed by Panel)	Score
A. Nomination is clear and organized and includes at least five (5) sources and verification of the facts claimed.	
B. Subject had a significant impact on its times and has statewide and/or national and/or international historical significance.	
C. Subject has a substantial connection to Pennsylvania.	
Total Points for Required Criteria (9 max):	

Special Considerations (completed by staff, 1=Yes/0=No)	Score
Represents an aspect of Pennsylvania history not well reflected in the marker program.	
Contributes to a more equitable geographic distribution of markers.	
Provides additional context to existing markers.	
Coincides with a significant anniversary.	
Total Points for Special Considerations (4 max):	

Total Cumulative Points (max 13):
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Reviewer:

Recommendation (yes/no/resubmit):

Comments:

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Pennsylvania Marker Search

Marker Forms and Guidance

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Marker Maintenance Schedule

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Pennsylvania Historical Marker Program

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission administers a program of historical markers to capture the stories of people, places, events, and innovations that have affected the lives of Pennsylvanians over the centuries. Nearly 2,600 cast aluminum markers feature subjects related to the histories of Native Americans, early colonialization, government and politics, athletes, entertainers and artists, movements for freedom and equality, historic industries, commerce, and utilities, and a multitude of other noteworthy topics of statewide or national significance.

PHMC is committed to representing and reflecting the experiences of the people and communities it serves. As a public-driven program, communities are empowered to recognize the importance of their history through the Pennsylvania Historical Marker Program.

Although the physical markers are the property and responsibility of the Commonwealth, the histories and pride belong to all Pennsylvanians.

The markers are not intended to be all-encompassing, but to serve as a launching point for the public to pursue self-directed learning should they desire to know more.

The [historical marker policy](#) was adopted on September 9, 2020.

Program Goals

- Encourage a public-driven program accessible to people of all backgrounds and abilities. The public can:
 - nominate subjects
 - report missing or damaged markers
 - request revisions to outdated or inaccurate texts on existing markers

PAHistoricalMarkers.com

Submission Notice

Please Note: By submitting materials with respect to state or federal historic preservation programs administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), you grant to the PHMC the rights to:

- Use the materials for education and promotional purposes and to promote the mission of the PHMC;
- Publish the materials on the PHMC Web site; and
- Make the materials available to researchers and scholars.



Nominate a Historical Marker

Access the Criteria and Guidelines for Approval.



Marker Forms and Guidance

Learn more about the marker program and what PHMC offers to help potential applicants



PHMC Historical Marker Search

Search the PA-SHARE historical marker database by keyword, county/municipality, and marker category.



Dedication Calendar

See what marker dedications are happening near you.



PAHistoricalMarkers.com

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Nomination Resources

If you are considering applying for a State Historical Marker, please review the below helpful sources.

Guidance

[Guidelines for Pennsylvania Historical Marker Nominations](#): Guidelines and instructions for preparing historical marker nominations.

[Submit and Manage a Marker Nomination in PA-SHARE](#): Step-by-step instructions for using PA-SHARE.

[Helpful Resources](#): Website links to help nomination preparers learn about and find primary and secondary sources for researching their nomination subject.

[Scoring Rubric](#): Used by the Marker Review Panel and Staff Marker Committee when evaluating marker nominations.

Forms

[Pre-Application Worksheet](#): Fillable worksheet to submit to PA SHPO.

[Significance and Documentation Form](#): Fillable worksheet to collect information required for a historical marker nomination.

Video Series

The following series of short videos is available on [YouTube](#):

- Overview of PHMC Marker Program
- New to Marker Program in 2025
- Marker Nominations Module 1: What you need to know

FAQs

How many marker applications are approved each year?

Not all marker applications are approved. Nominations must meet PHMC's Marker Criteria and follow the Nomination Guidelines. Each is reviewed by PHMC staff, the Marker Review Panel, and the Commission, which makes final decisions. While there are no set limits, about two-thirds of applications are typically approved each cycle.

Who decides if my application is approved?

The PHMC Staff Marker Committee and Marker Review Panel evaluate applications using the Evaluation Rubric and make recommendations to the Commission, which votes on final decisions. For details, see our Guidelines or YouTube tutorials.

How do I know if my subject will be approved?

Approval isn't guaranteed. To improve your chances, review the criteria, Guidelines, and YouTube tutorials, complete a pre-application, request feedback, and submit your final draft by April 1. Details are on our Nomination page.

FAQs

When will I know if my application is approved?

Decisions are made at the Commission's September meeting, with results shared in late September or early October.

I am having trouble with PA-SHARE...

If you're having technical issues using PA-SHARE, please review our [Help Desk tutorials](#), or email our Help Desk at pashare@pa.gov.

What if there is another marker, not a PHMC marker, for the proposed subject?

The Marker Review Panel considers existing markers. Per Criterion F, subjects already recognized may receive less favorable consideration, and duplicative PHMC markers might not be approved.

Can I schedule a time to talk to a staff person?

Yes, you can schedule a call by emailing ra-phmarkers@pa.gov.



Questions?