



# Signs

Design Manual

Chapter 9

Traffic Control

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Street or highway construction and maintenance signs fall into the same three categories as do other traffic signs, namely: Regulatory signs, Warning signs, and Guide signs. This section describes the different types of signs and their proper use, and discusses their positioning.

## Regulatory Signs

Regulatory signs impose legal obligations or restrictions on the motorist. Their use must be authorized by the officials having appropriate jurisdiction.

Regulatory signs are usually rectangular and carry a black legend and border on a white background. However, several regulatory signs are red and white and have differing shapes. These signs are the "STOP" sign, the "YIELD" sign, the "DO NOT ENTER" sign, and the "WRONG WAY" sign.

Some typical regulatory signs are shown in Part 6 of the MUTCD.

## Warning Signs

Warning signs for construction and maintenance projects are used to inform motorists of unusual conditions that may be expected in the work zone.

### Standard Signs

Standard warning signs for work zones are 48 in. x 48 in. (1200mm x 1200mm), diamond shaped (square with one diagonal vertical) and have a black symbol or legend on an orange background. Some typical standard warning signs may be found in Part 6 of the MUTCD.

### Non-standard Signs

In some instances, there may be no standard warning sign suitable for a given situation. Special signs may be designed with appropriate messages. However, in order to maintain uniformity, the use of non-standard signs should be held to a minimum and they should be used only with the State Traffic Engineer's approval.

### Advisory Speed Plates

Advisory speed plates are intended to be used in conjunction with warning signs to indicate a maximum recommended speed through the work area. A plate is to have a black legend on an orange background and must be mounted on the same assembly below the warning sign it supplements. It must not be used in conjunction with any sign other than a warning sign, nor can it be used alone.



Advisory speeds must be posted when the recommended maximum speed is at least 10 mph below the regulatory speed limit.

The engineer in charge of construction may lower the advisory speed when deemed appropriate.

## Guide Signs

Guide signs show destinations, directions, distances, services, points of interest and other geographical or cultural information. They may be used if their placement does not distract from the more important regulatory and warning signs.

Part 6 of the MUTCD states that the following informational signs are required at work zones:

- Standard route markings, to the extent that temporary route changes are necessary. This assembly includes the black-on-orange detour marker (M4-8).
- Directional signs and street name signs. When used with detour routing, these signs may have a black legend on an orange background.
- Special information signs relating to the work being done. Examples are: “ROAD WORK NEXT 5 MILES,” “END ROAD WORK,” “DETOUR,” and “PILOT CAR FOLLOW ME.” These signs have a black message on an orange background.

## Position of Signs

Signs are to be placed in a position where they will convey their messages most effectively. Sign location should be based on existing field conditions. As a general rule, signs should be placed on the right hand side of the roadway. A duplicate sign may be erected on the left hand side of the roadway when special emphasis is deemed necessary. Dual signs are required on divided highways.

According to Part 6 of the MUTCD, in open areas warning signs should be placed approximately 1500 feet (450 meters) in advance of the condition to which they are calling attention. When a series of advance warning signs is used, the warning sign nearest the work site is to be placed approximately 500 feet (150 meters) from the point of restriction with additional signs at 500 to 1000 foot (150 to 300 meter) intervals. A rule of thumb for spacing between signs in a series is:

- 250 feet (75 meters) for urban, residential, or business districts, or for roads with speeds under 40 mph,
- 500 feet (150 meters) for urban arterials and rural roads, or for roads with speeds over 40 mph, and
- 1000 feet (300 meters) for expressways and freeways.

In addition, the advance warning distance on expressways and limited access facilities should be increased to one-half mile (800 meters) or more. Typical sequences and spacings of advance warning signs are shown in Part 6 of the MUTCD and in the Traffic Control standards.

# Chronology of Changes to Design Manual Section:

## 009B-002 Signs

12/30/2011 Revised  
General updates.