

TRAFFIC AND SAFETY MANUAL

Purpose of Traffic Control Devices

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According to Section 1C.02 of the 11th Edition of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), traffic control devices include “all signs, signals, markings, channelization devices, or other devices that use colors, shapes, symbols, words, sounds, and/or tactile information for the primary purpose of communicating a regulatory, warning, or guidance message to road users on a street, highway, pedestrian facility, bikeway, pathway, or site roadway open to public travel.”

According to Section 1D.01 of the 11th Edition of the MUTCD, “The purpose of traffic control devices, as well as the principles for their use, is to promote highway safety, inclusion and mobility of all road users, and efficiency by providing for the orderly movement of road users on streets, highways, bikeways, and site roadways open to public travel throughout the Nation.”

Section 1D.01 continues, “To be effective, a traffic control device should:

- A. Fulfill a need;
- B. Command attention;
- C. Convey a clear, simple meaning;
- D. Command respect from road users; and
- E. Give adequate time for proper response.

Design, placement, operation, maintenance, and uniformity should be considered to maximize the effectiveness and ability of the traffic control devices to satisfy the five basic principles. Vehicle speed should be considered in the design, operation, placement, and location of various traffic control devices.

The proper use of traffic control devices should provide the road user with the information necessary to safely, efficiently, and lawfully use the streets, highways, pedestrian facilities, and bikeways.”

Revision History

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