

# TRAFFIC AND SAFETY MANUAL

## Introduction to Signs

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### Types of Signs

Historically, traffic signs have been classified into three types of signs: regulatory, warning, and guide.

#### Regulatory Signs

Regulatory signs give notice of traffic laws or regulations. The typical colors used on regulatory signs are black, white, and red. STOP, YIELD, DO NOT ENTER, and WRONG WAY signs are common regulatory signs. Most other regulatory signs are rectangular with a black legend on a white background.

Detailed requirements for regulatory signs are located in Subchapter 2B of the TAS Manual. Additional information regarding regulatory signs can be found in [Chapter 2B of the 11th Edition of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices \(MUTCD\)](#).

#### Warning Signs

Warning signs give notice of a situation that might not be readily apparent. These signs are generally diamond-shaped and have a black legend on a yellow background.

Detailed requirements for warning signs are located in Subchapter 2C of the TAS Manual. Additional information regarding warning signs can be found in [Chapter 2C of the MUTCD](#).

## Guide Signs

Guide signs show route designations, destinations, directions, distances, services, points of interest, and other geographical, recreational, or cultural information. These signs typically have a white legend on either a green, brown, or blue background.

Detailed requirements for guide signs are located in Subchapters 2D and 2E of the TAS Manual. Additional information regarding guide signs can be found as follows:

- Conventional Roads: [Chapter 2D of the MUTCD](#)
- Freeways and Expressways: [Chapter 2E of the MUTCD](#)
- General Information Signs: [Chapter 2H of the MUTCD](#)
- General Service Signs: [Chapter 2I of the MUTCD](#)
- Specific Service Signs (Logo Signs): [Chapter 2J of the MUTCD](#)
- Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs (TODS): [Chapter 2K of the MUTCD](#)
- Recreational and Cultural Interest Area Signs: [Chapter 2M of the MUTCD](#)

## Design of Signs

Signs should be legible to those for whom they are intended and should be understandable in time to allow for a proper response. Standard signs and object markers have a standardized design, shape, background, and legend as shown in the MUTCD.

Detailed drawings of standard signs, object markers, alphabets, symbols, and arrows can be found in the [“Standard Highway Signs” publication](#) and in the [SI-Series Standard Road Plans](#).

Additional information regarding general sign design can be found in [Section 2A.04 of the MUTCD](#).

## Sign Sizes

Various sections of the TAS Manual include sign size tables that show sizes based on the type of roadway facility. The facility types used in the headings of the sign size tables are defined as follows:

- Freeway: a divided highway with full control of access, where entrances and exits can be accomplished only via interchange ramps.
- Expressway: a divided highway with partial control of access. These highways may include a mixture of interchanges and at-grade intersections. They typically have a 65-mph posted speed and a depressed median.

- **Multi-lane Conventional Road:** a street or highway, other than an expressway or freeway, with two or more through lanes in one or both directions. These roads tend to be more urban, often having curbs or signals. They may be undivided or they may be divided with a raised or depressed median.
- **Single-lane Conventional Road:** a street or highway with only one through lane in each direction. These roads may also include passing lanes, turn lanes, or two-way left-turn lanes.

The dimensions shown in the sign size tables shall be used unless engineering judgment determines that other sizes are appropriate. Contact Traffic and Safety Bureau staff for assistance in such cases.

Additional information regarding sign sizes can be found in [Section 2A.07 of the MUTCD](#).

## **Word Messages**

Word messages should be as brief as practical to convey a clear, simple meaning. Messages should not contain periods, apostrophes, question marks, ampersands, or other punctuation or characters that are not letters, numerals, or hyphens unless necessary to avoid confusion.

The use of abbreviations should be kept to a minimum, except as otherwise stated in the MUTCD. Additional information regarding abbreviations can be found in [Section 1D.08 of the MUTCD](#).

Additional information regarding word messages can be found in [Section 2A.08 of the MUTCD](#).

## **Revision History**

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