Location and Height of Signs

Chapter 2A of the MUTCD suggests that signs be placed as far as practical from the traveled way so as not to pose a potential hazard for vehicles that run off the road. Under normal conditions, this distance is recommended to be 6 to 12 feet in rural areas and 2 feet behind curbs in urban locations, as shown in the following illustrations.

Less offset is permissible when conditions do not allow the recommended clearance, such as narrow right of way or steep fore slopes*. On very low volume rural roads (less than 200 vehicles per day [vpd]), offsets of as little as 2 feet from the traveled way may be used. A 1-foot clearance behind curbs in urban areas is permissible where narrow right of way restricts sidewalk and pole placement. Any sign within clear zone limits in rural areas must have breakaway supports or be properly shielded. More discussion on this can be found in the article “Sign Posts and Supports” (C14) in this manual.

Signs in rural areas should be mounted with a minimum vertical clearance of 5 feet from the bottom of the sign to the top of the pavement or road surface. This height increases to 7 feet minimum in urban areas where parked vehicles and pedestrian concerns require additional clearance for visibility. Any supplemental plates may be mounted below the primary sign at a height 1 foot less than these recommendations. See the following illustrations for more information.
Height and location of two-post roadside signs (rural)

Parking sign (business or residential district) (restricted right of way)

Route markers (business or residence district)

Directional marking (rural)

Overhead destination sign mounting

Location and height of signs C9.2
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Junction (rural)

Turn marking (business or residence district)