

MUTCD revision on the horizon

by Tom McDonald

On January 2, 2008, the FHWA published a Notice of Proposed Amendments to the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD) and allowed a comment period until July 31, 2008. Some significant revisions, many of which impact state and local agencies in Iowa, are included throughout all 10 parts of the manual. The established minimum levels of retroreflectivity for signs is not included in this notice but will be incorporated in the revised 2009 edition of the MUTCD.

The more significant proposed revisions are listed here by part and section. Compliance periods are allowed for revisions with higher potential economic impact for agencies.

Agencies are urged to review the proposed revisions and submit comments and questions for needed clarifications prior to the July 31 deadline. Areas of particular interest for Iowa agencies might include Section 6D.03, which will require workers to wear ANSI Class 2 apparel on all right-of ways, and Sections 8B.04 and 8B.05, which will require “stop” or “yield” signs at all passive highway-rail crossings.

Introduction

“Private property” is added as a location where MUTCD provisions apply, if the property is open to public travel. These areas would include shopping centers, parking lots, sports arenas, and similar business and recreational facilities.

Part 1: General

Section 1A.12 assigns a purple background color to signs for electronic toll-collection facilities.

Section 1A.13 contains several new definitions, including “flagger,” “hybrid signal,” “private property,” “open to public travel,” and “worker.” The list now includes 127 definitions.

Section 1A.14 lists a total of 38 acronyms and abbreviations.

Part 2: Signs

Part 2 introduces many new symbols.

Section 2A.07 (formerly 2A.08) adds object markers to the list of devices that must be retroreflective or illuminated. More emphasis on these devices is found throughout Chapter 2A.

Section 2A.11 explains increased dimensions for some signs and recommends that supplemental plaques for oversized signs be proportionally increased in size as well.

Section 2A.13 recommends that minimum letter size ratios be one inch per 30 feet of legibility distance.

Section 2A.15 is a new section on enhanced conspicuity for standard signs.

Chapter 2B describes several new regulatory signs, including those for roundabouts and for use of headlights. This chapter also eliminates the use of several common plaques with “stop” signs.

Section 2B.03 increases the size of several signs in Table 2B-1 and adds a new table, Table 2B-2, for multilane applications.

Section 2B.04 describes new restrictions on the use of portable “stop” signs at signalized intersections during power outages.

Section 2B.10 adds restrictions regarding which items can be mounted on the back of “stop” signs and “yield” signs. Use of two “stop” or “yield” signs on the same support, facing the same direction of travel, is prohibited.

Section 2B.12 describes new requirements and restrictions for regulating “pedestrian crossing” signs.

Chapter 2C describes revised requirements for the use of several horizontal alignment signs and lists several new warning signs, including specific requirements for motorcycles and weather conditions. Curve-speed advisory signs are deleted and some word-message signs are eliminated, including “hill,” “stop ahead,” and “divided highway.”

Section 2C.03 requires the use of fluorescent-yellow-green (FYG) for school-related warning signs.

Section 2C.04 increases the size of some warning signs for multilane roads, in Table 2C-2.

Section 2C.05 lists revised values in Table 2C-4 for the placement of warning signs.

Section 2C.06 contains revised requirements for the placement of horizontal alignment warning signs.

Chapter 2D describes new guide signs, such as combination lane use/destination overhead guide signs and destination signs at roundabouts.

Section 2D.05 places restrictions on the use of all-capital lettering on conventional guide signs.

Section 2D.45 (formerly 2D.38) describes new requirements for street-name signs, including limitations on allowable background colors.

Section 2D.52 is a new section for community way-finding signs.

Section 2I.09 is a new section on acknowledgment signs.

Chapter 2L (formerly 3C) adds barricades and gates to the list of object markers.

Section 2L.05 (formerly 3F.01) is a revised section on barricades.

Section 2L.06 is a new section on gates.

Chapter 2M is a new chapter on changeable message signs.

Part 3: Markings

Chapter 3A states that pavement markings, as necessary, are required in both public and private areas if the facility is open to public travel.

Section 3A.04 adds purple markings for use on toll facility approach lanes.

Section 3A.06 lists several new definitions, such as “neutral area” and “physical gore.”

Section 3B.04 states that a dotted-white lane line is required for acceleration, deceleration, and auxiliary lanes.

Section 3B.17 illustrates new “Do-Not-Block-Intersection” markings.

Section 3B.22 includes a new section on speed-reduction markings.

Chapter 3C (formerly 3B.24 and 3B.25) describes markings for roundabouts.

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Chapter 3H is a new chapter on rumble-strip markings.

Part 4: Highway traffic signals

Section 4A.02 adds new and expands existing definitions related to traffic signals, including “hybrid signals,” “intersections” (expanded), and “permissive mode” (expanded).

Sections 4C.04 through 4C.06 explains revisions to several traffic-signal warrants.

Section 4C.09 describes a new signal warrant for intersections near a highway-rail crossing.

Chapter 4D explains numerous changes related to traffic-control signal features, including number of signal faces, visibility, lateral positioning, miscellaneous signal indications, and yellow change/red clearance intervals.

Chapter 4E contains several revisions related to pedestrian-control features, including countdown signals and detectors.

Chapter 4F is a new chapter on pedestrian hybrid signals.

Section 4G.04 is a new section on emergency-vehicle hybrid signals.

Chapter 4K is a new chapter on toll plaza traffic signals.

Part 5: Traffic control devices for low-volume roads

Section 5A.01 contains an updated definition of “low-volume road,” revised to enhance rural area intent.

Part 6: Temporary traffic control

Section 6A.01 expands the section on the needs and control of all road users to include public travel on private roads.

Sections 6D.01 and 6D.02 contain numerous revisions regarding pedestrians and accessibility considerations.

Section 6D.03 expands the requirement that workers wear ANSI Class 2 or 3 apparel to include all right-of-way workers, not just federal-aid right-of-way workers.

Section 6E.01 is expanded to include automated flagger assistance devices in the definition of a flagger.

Section 6E.02 adds appropriate ANSI headwear to the required flagger apparel. Law enforcement officers are required to wear

apparel similar to that of other workers.

Section 6E.03 recommends a seven-foot-long handle for the stop/slow paddle.

Sections 6E.04, 6E .05, and 6E .06 contain new sections describing automated flagger assistance devices.

Section 6E.30 describes the “new traffic pattern ahead” sign.

Section 6E.57 proposes numerous changes for portable changeable message signs.

Section 6E.58 states that an alternating-diamond display is permitted for arrow panels.

Section 6E.76 contains several changes to the section on temporary raised pavement markings.

Several sections have been removed from Chapter 6F, including floodlights, glare screens, and crash cushions.

Chapters 6H and 6I are switched in order.

Section 6H.01 requires all responders in traffic incident management areas to implement the Incident Command System, as required by the National Incident Management System.

Chapter 6I modifies several typical applications, such as TAs 37, 38, 39, 42, and 44, where an arrow panel is required for each lane closure.

Part 7: Traffic controls for school areas

Section 7B.07 states that the color of school warning signs and plaques must be fluorescent-yellow-green (FYG).

Section 7B.09 is a revised section on school-zone signing.

Section 7B.10 is a new section for school advance-crossing assembly.

Section 7B.12 outlines the new symbol sign required for “school bus stop ahead” signs.

Section 7B.13 describes the new “school bus turn ahead” sign.

Other sign revision are also listed in Chapter 7B.

Section 7D.03 revises the qualifications for school crossing guards.

Section 7D.04 requires law enforcement officers to wear ANSI Class 2 apparel when performing school-crossing supervision.

Section 7D.05 contains revised guidance statements regarding standards for operating procedures of crossing guards.

In Chapter 7E, references to student patrols have been removed.

Part 8: Traffic controls for highway-rail crossings

Chapter 8A contains several new definitions, including “diagnostic team,” “locomotive horn,” “pathway-rail grade crossing,” and “wayside horn.”

Sections 8B.04 and 8B.05 (new section) require “stop” or “yield” signs at all passive crossings.

Section 8B.06 describes several new requirements for the installation of certain signs and plaques.

Section 8B.13 revises the requirements for emergency-notification signs.

Section 8B.21 requires a stop line at crossings with active control devices.

Section 8C.06 is a new section on wayside horn systems.

Section 8C.09 adds a new section for rail crossing in the vicinity of roundabouts or circular intersections.

Chapter 8D is a new chapter on quiet-zone treatments.

Chapter 8E is a new chapter on pathway-rail crossings.

Part 9: Traffic controls for bicycle facilities

Section 9B.01 requires the vertical clearance of an overhead sign on shared use paths to be a minimum of eight feet.

Section 9B.06 describes a new “Bicycles May Use Full Lane” sign.

Section 9B.09 adds a new description for selective exclusion signs.

Several other new signs are also included in Chapter 9B.

Section 9C.07 describes new shared-lane markings.

Part 10: Traffic controls for highway-light rail transit grade crossings

The proposed revisions for Part 10 are not described here, since Iowa does not have any light-rail facilities. ■