



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Memorandum

Subject: MUTCD Interpretation – Official Ruling
2(09)-78(I) – Signing for Priced Managed
Lanes without Transponder Requirement—
Colorado

Date: **NOV 20 2013**

From: Mark R. Kehrl 
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To: John Cater
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Division

The FHWA's Office of Transportation Operations provides this official interpretation on the provisions of the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways* (MUTCD) regarding signing for priced managed lane facilities based on the August 29 letter to your office from the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). For recordkeeping purposes, we have assigned this inquiry the following Official Ruling number and title: "2(09)-78 (I) – Signing for Priced Managed Lane without Transponder Requirement—Colorado."

Specifically, the inquiry deals with the signing for a priced managed lane that collects tolls electronically only, but does not require registration in a toll account program to use the lane. Registration is required for non-toll travel by high-occupancy vehicles (HOV).

The provisions of Chapter 2G of the MUTCD for priced managed lanes address facilities that are electronic toll collection (ETC) account-only. Signing for such facilities reflects these ETC account-only toll facilities also where provided in Chapter 2F. The signing for a priced managed lane facility that is open to non-registered traffic for which the toll is billed electronically would be an extension of the provisions of Chapter 2F for a toll road operated similarly.

Paragraph 7 of Section 2G.18 and Figure 2G-18A provide guide signing for a priced managed facility that is limited to only two operational strategies. For the modified header panel illustrating the regulatory format in Figure 2G-18A, the use of the legend OR indicates the second of two alternatives. Further, the use of the legend ONLY accentuates this intended limitation. Where more than two operational strategies apply to a priced managed facility, the guide signing for these facilities cannot accommodate displaying all of them. Additionally, when only two of the operational strategies are signed while the guide signing omits the others, the signing presents an incomplete and ambiguous message and does not fulfill its function of providing positive guidance to the motorist.

Modifications to the Advance and Entrance Direction priced managed lane guide signs described in MUTCD Section 2G.18 and illustrated in Figure 2G-18A would include a black-on-yellow header displaying the legend TOLL in place of the regulatory header (purple background for ETC-only or white background for ETC or HOV) shown. Supplemental signing would then display specific operational restrictions or allowances that apply to the priced managed lane. These would include the primary transponder system accepted for registrants in a toll account program and the accepted transponder system for non-toll or discounted travel by HOV traffic. The use of supplemental signing for this purpose is consistent with Paragraph 14 of Section 2F.13 and with Figures 2F-6 and 2G-21. The enforcement of such restrictions or allowances can be achieved by repeated supplemental signing within the managed lane corridor.

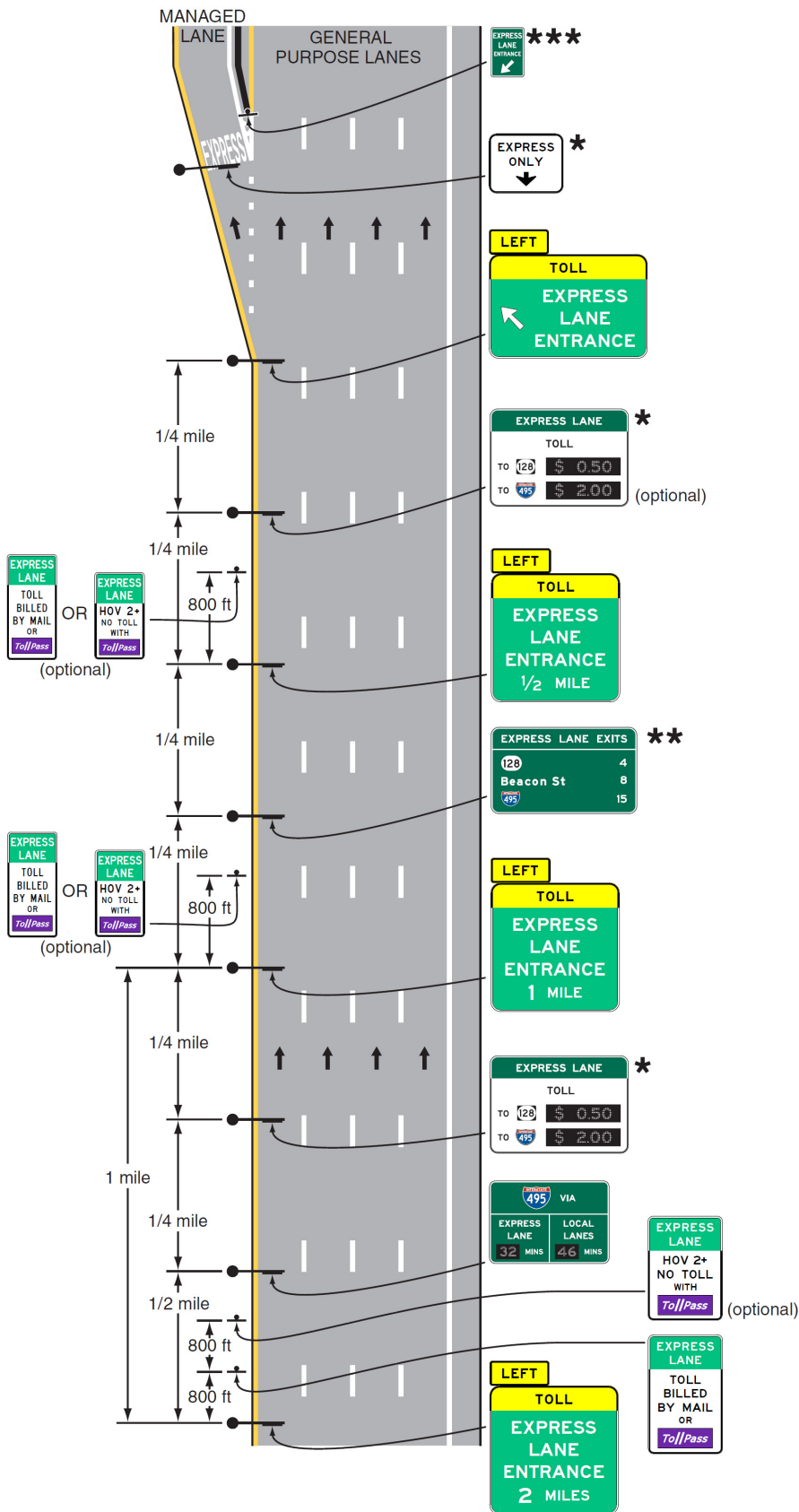
The Periods of Operation (R3-44 series) signs described in MUTCD Section 2G.17 would be modified to display the legend EXPRESS ONLY to indicate the beginning of the regulatory requirements that are defined on the signs earlier in the sequence. In order to minimize the amount of information displayed on the sign and to minimize ambiguous messages at a decision point, the accepted forms of payment are omitted from this modified sign for this type of combined operation.

The attached figure illustrates how the MUTCD figure might be modified for application to a priced managed lane without a requirement for registration in a toll account program. This modification represents that the priced managed lane is always a toll facility open to all designated classes of vehicles.

Please share this interpretation with CDOT as appropriate. We expect to address this operational configuration in a future revision to the MUCTD.

Attachment

Figure 2G-XX. Example of Signing for the Entrance to an Access-Restricted Priced Managed Lane on which Registration in a Toll Account Program is not Required



Legend

→ Direction of travel

Notes:

1. For access to a managed lane on the right-hand side, the same signing sequence would be used with adjustments made to sign messages
2. Geometry is for illustrative purposes only; use locally applied geometric criteria
3. The minimum vehicle occupancy requirement and hours of operation on the sign may vary for each facility
4. Vehicles need not have a registered ETC account. Tolls to non-registered vehicles are billed by mail to vehicle owners through license plate character recognition. Toll discounts or exemptions through a registration program might be applicable for certain vehicles.
5. The basic toll rate for passenger vehicles is displayed. Reduced tolls might be available for registered ETC accounts or for high-occupancy vehicles.
6. See Chapter 3D for pavement markings

* Potential location of a Changeable Message Sign (CMS) for reversible or contraflow operations

** For access-restricted facilities; destinations may be augmented to accompany routes on Interchange Sequence signs (see Figure 2E-31)

*** Barrier-separated facilities only