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PREFACE

Detailed drawings of the Standard Highway Signs prescribed or provided for in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), 2003 Edition, have been prepared by the Office of Transportation Operations, Federal Highway Administration, U. S. Department of Transportation, for use by all traffic authorities, agencies, jurisdictions and persons involved with the fabrication, installation and maintenance of traffic signs on streets and highways in the United States.

These drawings are presented in English units as an alternate to metric dimensional designs. They are provided to promote uniformity in design throughout the United States in accordance with Title 23, U.S. Code, Sections 109(b), 109(d) and 402 (a), and Highway Safety Program Standard 13, "Traffic Engineering Services". As stated in the MUTCD, "Uniformity in design includes shape, color, dimensions, legends and retroreflection. This manual shows typical signs approved for use on streets and highways. Detailed drawings of these and other approved signs are available to State and local highway and traffic authorities and similarly interested agencies. All symbols shall be unmistakably similar to those shown and where a word message is applicable, the wording shall be as herein provided unless alternative wording is optional. Most standard symbols are oriented facing left; however, this does not preclude the use of mirror images of these symbols where the reverse orientation might better convey a direction of movement to vehicle operators. Standardization of these designs does not preclude further improvements by minor changes in the proportion of the symbols, width of borders, or layout of word messages, but all shapes and colors shall be as indicated.

The format for the English and metric versions of the SHS has a basis in English units.

A soft conversion from the standard English measure has been used. For example, an 18 inch is now represented as 450 millimeters as opposed to 452.2 millimeters. It should be noted that the difference is only 1.016% and any of these layouts can be applied to any standard English measure blank size by simply scaling up all dimensions by a factor of 1.016%.

The signs shall be fabricated in reasonable conformity to the dimensions in the detailed drawing contained herein. It is recognized that there is a small difference in dimensions between the metric and English versions of the sign details. This small variation in size between English and metric units does not affect the sign legibility. Minor Adjustments to legend spacing dimensions on a sign face will be permitted to achieve design accuracy and accommodate reasonable fabrication tolerances. Small variations in letter height, letter stroke width, letter spacing and interline spacing between lines of legend are expected as reasonable tolerances in the sign fabrication process. These variations will not affect the legibility of the sign. Placement of the sign legend on the sign face in reasonable conformity to the sign details will provide the design legibility for the sign.

An attempt has been made to provide uniformity of specific design details between two or more different types of signs having approximate sizes. Additionally, details for arrows and other items have been standardized as much as possible to facilitate fabrication of the signs and for national uniformity.

For word messages, only the overall length and placement of the characters are shown. Only the Series 2000 Standard Alphabet spacing charts may be used to determine overall length.

The spacing between individual character combinations can be adjusted visually to attain the most satisfying balance. Where spacing between individual letters has been reduced or increased the dimension is noted by an asterisk on the plate dimension detail. Any such change represents a deviation from the full spacing as suggested in the spacing charts on the following pages.

For symbol messages, the overall height and width of the symbol and its placement on the sign is shown. The exact detail of the symbol is shown on a grid. All symbols and symbol drawings are contained in the Appendix in Section 6. Any symbol may be enlarged to any size if done proportionally. The grid is provided as a reference to ensure the proportional relationship(s) remain correct.

The Standard Highway Signs publication prescribes design details for a number of different sign sizes to reflect the specified sizes in the MUTCD base on 3 categories of highway facilities and Minimum and Oversized as follows:

Freeways - A divided highway with full control of access.

Expressway - A divided highway with partial control of access.

Conventional Road - A street or highway other than Freeway, expressway or low-volume road.

Minimum - For use on low-speed roadways where the reduced legend size would be adequate for sign legibility.

Low-Volume Road - A roadway outside built-up areas of cities, towns and communities that is either paved or unpaved having a traffic volume less than 400 vehicles AADT.

Special Purpose Road - A low-volume, low-speed, road that serves recreational or resource development activities or that provides local access.

Bicycle Facilities - Facilities provided for bicycle usage defined as either in the roadway or a shared-use path that is physically separated from motorized traffic.

Oversized - The oversized sign size and larger freeway or expressway signs may be used for those applications where speed, volume or other factors result in conditions where increased emphasis, improved recognition or increased legibility would be desirable.

The sign size tables from the MUTCD are duplicated for each section of this publication to assist in selecting the appropriate size of sign. The specified sign sizes may also be found in the appropriate sections of the MUTCD (<http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov>).

The decision to use the most appropriate sign size is the responsibility of the street or transportation agency or engineer having authority over the traffic facility. Larger traffic signs are needed for two reasons. The driving population is aging with reduced visual acuity requiring larger sign legends for the signs to be read. There has been an increase in traffic volumes and multi-lane roadways dictating larger and more effective signing for conspicuity and legibility.