

Types of Signs

Traffic and Safety Manual
Chapter 2
Signing

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Historically traffic signs have been classified into three types of signs.

- Regulatory signs ([MUTCD Section 2B](#)) are used to inform motorists of traffic laws or regulations.
- Warning signs ([MUTCD Section 2C](#)) are used to inform motorists of a situation that might not be readily apparent.
- Guide signs show route designations, destinations, directions, distances, services, points of interest, and other geographical, recreational, or cultural information.
 - [MUTCD Section 2D](#) (Guide - Conventional Roads)
 - [MUTCD Section 2E](#) (Guide – Freeways & Expressways)
 - [MUTCD Section 2H](#) (General Information)
 - [MUTCD Section 2I](#) (General Service)
 - [MUTCD Section 2J](#) (Specific Service – Logos)
 - [MUTCD Section 2M](#) (Recreational and Cultural Interest Area)

Regulatory Signs

Regulatory signs should be used to inform motorists of traffic laws and regulations that are unique to the area or specific to an area and not for common laws or regulations. The signs shall be installed at or near the location where the regulations apply and shall clearly identify the requirements imposed by the regulations.

Most regulatory signs are rectangular, with black, white or red legend on a black, white or red background.

Warning Signs

Warning signs call attention to unexpected conditions on or adjacent to the highway and to conditions that may not be readily apparent. The use of warning signs shall be based on an engineering study or on engineering judgment. The use of warning signs should be kept at a minimum as unnecessary use can tend to lead to disrespect for all signs. If the condition or activity is seasonal or temporary the warning signs should be removed or covered when the condition or activity does not exist.

The MUTCD provides guidance on the use of standard warning signs. Where standard warning signs do not cover the conditions that may be encountered, special word message warning signs other than those specified in the MUTCD may be developed and installed.

Guide Signs

Guide signs are essential to direct motorists along the roadway, to inform them of intersecting routes, to direct them to cities, towns, or other major destinations, to identify nearby rivers and streams, parks, forests, and historical sites, and generally to give information that will help them along their way in the most simple, direct manner possible. The development of guide signing is approached on the premise

that the signing is primarily for the benefit and direction of road users who are not familiar with the route or area. Guide signs are solely for the purpose of traffic control and are not an advertising medium. Guide signs are generally white legend on either a green, brown or blue background.