

Proposed Dual-Language Signing Parameters

The *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways* (MUTCD) is the National standard for all traffic control devices on any roadway open to public travel. The MUTCD generally does not provide for the display of alternative or supplemental languages on traffic signs. Recent inquiries from Indian Tribal Governments have requested that traffic signs displaying dual languages be erected on roads and highways that traverse Tribal lands. Tribal Governments may use dual language signing on roadways in accordance with the conditions herein to provide navigational information that support travel within the Tribal land. The following is the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) policy on the display of alternative or supplemental languages on traffic signs.

No sign shall display an alternative language that supplants a word legend displayed in English in the contiguous United States (including the District of Columbia), Alaska, or Hawaii. However, the display of additional legend in another language to supplement the legend displayed in English may be allowed in certain, limited cases. These cases are described herein.

The additional supplemental language legend shall be deemphasized and shall be located below the sign displaying the English equivalent on the same or separate sign substrate. This deemphasizing shall be accomplished by the use of a reduced letter height for the supplemental language legend no larger than 75% of the recommended minimum letter height in the MUTCD for the English language legend.

The display of a maximum of two languages on a single sign or sign assembly may be allowed, subject to the following limitations:

1. Such signs shall be limited to roadways within, or immediately adjacent to (for destination signs only), the boundaries of an Indian Tribal land.
2. English shall be the primary language legend. The supplemental language legend shall be the native language of the specific Tribe that governs the Tribal land in which the sign is located.
3. The display of a supplemental language shall be limited to the following types of signs:
 - a. Jurisdictional Boundary (I-2) and Geographic Reference (I-3) signs as provided in Section 2H.04 of the MUTCD;
 - b. Memorial or Dedication signs as provided in Section 2M.10 of the MUTCD;
 - c. Interpretive signs such as site identification signs found at sites of historical or cultural significance; and
 - d. Destination signs
4. The use of such signs shall be limited to conventional roadways with posted speed limits of 40 m.p.h. or less, or with traffic volumes of less than 400 AADT. Such signs shall not be installed on freeways, expressways, parkways, ramps, or similar facilities.
5. In accordance with Section 2D.43 of the MUTCD, a pictograph may be displayed on a Street Name (D3-1) sign. The pictograph should be located to the left of the legend and shall not exceed the height and width of the upper-case letter height of the principal legend.
6. Supplemental languages shall not be displayed on any other sign including, but not limited to, Regulatory, Warning (including School Zone), and all other Guide (including Street Name, General or Specific Service, Tourist-Oriented Directional, Auto Tour Route, and Acknowledgment) signs.
7. The legend displayed in the supplemental language shall be limited to the overall name of the tribe or an interior named community or geographic feature within the tribal land. This supplemental legend shall be the idiomatic equivalent of the primary legend that is displayed in English. Additional legend or ancillary phrases shall not be displayed on the signs. Because this supplemental language legend constitutes an increase in the informational load imposed on the driver, decorative elements, pictographs, logos, symbols, or graphical representations shall not be displayed on the sign.

8. Signs displaying a supplemental language shall be post-mounted roadside signs. Such signs shall not be overhead installations.
9. Installation of the signs shall not interfere with the placement of any other necessary signing and shall not compromise the safety or efficiency of traffic flow. The signing shall be limited to one sign at an appropriate location in each route direction, each as an independent sign installation.
10. All letters and numerals displayed on the sign for the main characters of the alternative language shall be as provided in the *Standard Highway Signs and Markings* reference publication. Unique characters that are necessary for the proper translation to the supplemental language, but not provided in the FHWA Standard Alphabets, may be used. These unique characters are to be kept to a minimum and shall be based on the characteristics of the letter forms of the Standard Alphabets, such as stroke width and arc, to the extent practicable.

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