



National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

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Item No.: 15B.GMI.01

NCUTCD Proposal for Changes to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE: GMI Committee
ITEM NUMBER: 15B.GMI.01
TOPIC: Acknowledgement Signs
ORIGIN OF REQUEST: Texas and Florida DOT
AFFECTED SECTIONS OF MUTCD: 2H.08, 2L.01 and 2L.02

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY:

- Approved by Technical Committee: 06/17/2015
- Approved by NCUTCD Council: not yet presented to Council

This is a proposal for recommended changes to the MUTCD that have been developed by a technical committee of the NCUTCD. The NCUTCD is distributing it to its sponsoring organizations for review and comment. Sponsor comments will be considered in revising the proposal prior to NCUTCD Council consideration. This proposal does not represent a revision of the MUTCD and does not constitute official MUTCD standards, guidance, or options. If approved by the NCUTCD Council, the recommended changes will be submitted to FHWA for consideration for inclusion in a future MUTCD revision. The MUTCD can be revised only through the federal rulemaking process.

SUMMARY:

The proposed modifications provide the ability to display a sponsor acknowledgment message on a permanent changeable message sign that is displaying a travel time or safety message and to allow the use of a larger size static sponsor acknowledgement sign for freeways.

DISCUSSION:

While the MUTCD addresses the application of acknowledging sponsorship of roadway activities and services on static signs, it does not address the application of sponsorship on permanent changeable message signs. The system of permanent changeable message sign is growing nationwide and State Departments of Transportation are looking for guidance on how to appropriately incorporate sponsorship acknowledgements onto these types of signs. The sponsorship possibilities are unique with changeable message signs in that the routine information which is being sponsored is displayed on the sign itself (safety and travel time messages) as compared to a ground mounted static sponsorship signs which is associated with a sponsorship activity typically taking place on the ground. The current sponsor acknowledgement program language, which limits the size of the acknowledgment sign to 24 square feet with the

36 maximum 8 square feet for the sponsor acknowledgement, is not applicable to the larger freeway
37 changeable message signs which are sized for a variety of different messages needed to display.

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39 **RECOMMENDED MUTCD CHANGES**

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41 The following present the proposed changes to the current MUTCD within the context of the
42 current MUTCD language. Proposed additions to the MUTCD are shown in blue underline and
43 proposed deletions from the MUTCD are shown in ~~red strikethrough~~. Changes previously
44 approved by NCUTCD Council (but not yet adopted by FHWA) are shown in green double
45 underline for additions and ~~green double strikethrough~~ for deletions. In some cases, background
46 comments may be provided with the MUTCD text. These comments are indicated by

47 **[highlighted light blue in brackets]**.

48

49 **Section 2H.08 Acknowledgment Signs**

50 Support:

51 01 Acknowledgment signs are a way of recognizing a company, business, or volunteer group
52 that provides a highway-related service. Acknowledgment signs include sponsorship signs for
53 adopt-a-highway litter removal programs, maintenance of a parkway or interchange, and other
54 highway maintenance or beautification sponsorship programs.

55 01A For sponsor acknowledgement message on Changeable Message Sign (CMS) see Section
56 2L.02.

57 *Guidance:*

58 02 A State or local highway agency that elects to have an acknowledgment sign program
59 should develop an acknowledgment sign policy. The policy should require that eligible
60 sponsoring organizations comply with State laws prohibiting discrimination based on race,
61 religion, color, age, sex, national origin, and other applicable laws. The acknowledgment sign
62 policy should include all of the provisions regarding sign placement and sign design that are
63 described in this Section.

64 **Standard:**

65 03 **Because regulatory, warning, and guide signs have a higher priority, acknowledgment**
66 **signs shall only be installed where adequate spacing is available between the**
67 **acknowledgment sign and other higher priority signs. Acknowledgment signs shall not be**
68 **installed in a position where they would obscure the road users' view of other traffic**
69 **control devices.**

70 04 **Acknowledgment signs shall not be installed at any of the following locations:**

71 **A. On the front or back of, adjacent to, or around any other traffic control device,**
72 **including traffic signs, highway traffic signals, and changeable message signs;**

73 **B. On the front or back of, adjacent to, or around the supports or structures of other**
74 **traffic control devices, or bridge piers; or**

75 **C. At key decision points where a road user's attention is more appropriately focused**
76 **on other traffic control devices, roadway geometry, or traffic conditions, including**
77 **exit and entrance ramps, intersections, grade crossings, toll plazas, temporary**
78 **traffic control zones, and areas of limited sight distance.**

79 *Guidance:*

80 05 *The minimum spacing between acknowledgment signs and any other traffic control signs,*
81 *except parking regulation signs, should be:*

- 82 A. 150 feet on roadways with speed limits of less than 30 mph,
- 83 B. 200 feet on roadways with speed limits of 30 to 45 mph, and
- 84 C. 500 feet on roadways with speed limits greater than 45 mph.

85 06 *If the placement of a newly-installed higher-priority traffic control device, such as a higher-*
86 *priority sign, a highway traffic signal, or a temporary traffic control device, conflicts with an*
87 *existing acknowledgment sign, the acknowledgment sign should be relocated, covered, or*
88 *removed.*

89 Option:

90 07 State or local highway agencies may develop their own acknowledgment sign designs and
91 may also use their own pictograph (see definition in Section 1A.13) and/or a brief jurisdiction-
92 wide program slogan as part of any portion of the acknowledgment sign, provided that the signs
93 comply with the provisions for shape, color, and lettering style in this Chapter and in Chapter
94 2A.

95 *Guidance:*

96 08 *Acknowledgment signs should clearly indicate the type of highway services provided by the*
97 *sponsor.*

98 **Standard:**

99 09 **In addition to the general provisions for signs described in Chapter 2A and the sign**
100 **design principles covered in the “Standard Highway Signs and Markings” book (see**
101 **Section 1A.11), acknowledgment sign designs developed by State or local highway agencies**
102 **shall comply with the following provisions:**

- 103 A. Neither the sign design nor the sponsor acknowledgment logo shall contain any
104 contact information, directions, slogans (other than a brief jurisdiction-wide
105 program slogan, if used), telephone numbers, or Internet addresses, including
106 domain names and uniform resource locators (URL);
- 107 B. Except for the lettering, if any, on the sponsor acknowledgment logo, all of the
108 lettering shall be in upper-case letters as provided in the “Standard Highway Signs
109 and Markings” book (see Section 1A.11);
- 110 C. In order to keep the main focus on the highway-related service and not on the
111 sponsor acknowledgment logo, the area reserved for the sponsor acknowledgment
112 logo shall not exceed 1/3 of the total area of the sign ~~and shall be a maximum of 8~~
113 ~~square feet~~, and shall not be located at the top of the sign;
- 114 D. The entire sign display area in the sign assembly shall not exceed 24 square feet for
115 conventional roads and 48 square feet for expressways or freeways;
- 116 E. The sign shall not contain any messages, lights, symbols, or trademarks that
117 resemble any official traffic control devices;
- 118 F. The sign shall not contain any external or internal illumination, light-emitting
119 diodes, luminous tubing, fiber optics, luminescent panels, or other flashing,
120 moving, or animated features; and
- 121 G. The sign shall not distract from official traffic control messages such as regulatory,
122 warning, or guidance messages.

123 Support:

124 10 Examples of acknowledgment sign designs are shown in Figure 2H-5.

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128 **Section 2L.01 Description of Changeable Message Signs**

129 Support:

130 01 A changeable message sign (CMS) is a traffic control device that is capable of displaying
131 one or more alternative messages. Some changeable message signs have a blank mode when no
132 message is displayed, while others display multiple messages with only one of the messages
133 displayed at a time (such as OPEN/CLOSED signs at weigh stations).

134 02 The provisions in this Chapter apply to both permanent and portable changeable message
135 signs with electronic displays. Additional provisions that only apply to portable changeable
136 message signs can be found in Section 6F.60. The provisions in this Chapter do not apply to
137 changeable message signs with non-electronic displays that are changed either manually or
138 electromechanically, such as a hinged-panel, rotating-drum, or back-lit curtain or scroll CMS.

139 **Standard:**

140 03 **Except as provided in Paragraph 2 of Section 2L.02, changeable message signs shall**
141 **display only traffic operational, regulatory, warning, ~~and~~ guidance, and acknowledgement**
142 **information. Advertising messages shall not be displayed on changeable message signs or**
143 **its supports or other equipment.**

144 04 **The design of legends for non-electronic display changeable message signs shall comply**
145 **with the provisions of Chapters 2A through 2K, 2M, and 2N of this Manual. All other**
146 **changeable message signs shall comply with the design and application principles**
147 **established in this Chapter and in Chapter 2A.**

148 04A A State or local highway agency that elects to have an acknowledgment sign policy for
149 a safety or travel time changeable message sign program shall comply with 2H.08.

150 *Guidance:*

151 05 *Blank-out signs that display only single-phase, predetermined electronic-display legends*
152 *that are limited by their composition and arrangement of pixels or other illuminated forms in a*
153 *fixed arrangement (such as a blank-out sign indicating a part-time turn prohibition, a blank-out*
154 *or changeable lane-use sign, or a changeable OPEN/CLOSED sign for a weigh station) should*
155 *comply with the provisions of the applicable Section for the specific type of sign, provided that*
156 *the letter forms, symbols, and other legend elements are duplicates of the static messages as*
157 *detailed in the “Standard Highway Signs and Markings” book (see Section 1A.11). Because such*
158 *a sign is effectively an illuminated version of a static sign, the size of its legend elements, the*
159 *overall size of the sign, and placement of the sign should comply with the applicable provisions*
160 *for the static version of the sign.*

161

162 **Section 2L.02 Applications of Changeable Message Signs**

163 Support:

164 01 Changeable message signs have a large number of applications including, but not limited to,
165 the following:

- 166 A. Incident management and route diversion
- 167 B. Warning of adverse weather conditions
- 168 C. Special event applications associated with traffic control or conditions
- 169 D. Control at crossing situations
- 170 E. Lane, ramp, and roadway control
- 171 F. Priced or other types of managed lanes
- 172 G. Travel times
- 173 H. Warning situations

- 174 I. Traffic regulations
- 175 J. Speed control
- 176 K. Destination guidance

177 Option:

178 02 Changeable message signs may be used by State and local highway agencies to display
179 safety messages, transportation-related messages, emergency homeland security messages, and
180 America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) alert messages.

181 *Guidance:*

182 03 *State and local highway agencies should develop and establish a policy regarding the*
183 *display of the types of messages provided in Paragraph 2. When changeable message signs are*
184 *used at multiple locations to address a specific situation, the message displays should be*
185 *consistent along the roadway corridor and adjacent corridors, which might necessitate*
186 *coordination among different operating agencies.*

187 Support:

188 04 Examples of safety messages include “SEAT BELT BUCKLED?” and “DON'T DRINK
189 AND DRIVE.” Examples of transportation-related messages include “STADIUM EVENT
190 SUNDAY, EXPECT DELAYS NOON TO 4 PM” and “OZONE ALERT CODE RED—USE
191 TRANSIT.”

192 *Guidance:*

193 05 *When a CMS is used to display a safety or transportation related message, the message*
194 *should be simple, brief, legible, and clear. A CMS should not be used to display a safety or*
195 *transportation-related message if doing so would adversely affect respect for the sign.*
196 *“CONGESTION AHEAD” or other overly simplistic or vague messages should not be displayed*
197 *alone. These messages should be supplemented with a message on the location or distance to the*
198 *congestion or incident, delay and travel time, alternative route, or other similar messages.*

199 **Standard:**

200 06 **When a CMS is used to display a safety, transportation-related, emergency homeland**
201 **security, or AMBER alert message, the display format shall not be of a type that could be**
202 **considered similar to advertising displays.**

203 Support:

204 07 Section 2B.13 contains information regarding the design of changeable message signs that
205 are used to display variable speed limits that change based on ambient or operational conditions,
206 or that display the speed at which approaching drivers are traveling.

207 **Standard:**

208 08 **When a CMS is used in conjunction with travel times and safety message**
209 **to display a sponsor acknowledgement name or logo, the CMS shall comply with the**
210 **following provisions:**

- 211 **A. The area reserved for the sponsor acknowledgment logo shall not exceed 1/3 of the**
212 **total message display area of the CMS;**
- 213 **B. The sponsor acknowledgement logo shall be located on the right side or bottom of**
214 **the message display area;**
- 215 **C. The design legends for travel time and safety messages on the CMS shall comply**
216 **with provision of 2L.03; and**
- 217 **D. A sponsor acknowledgement message or logo display shall have an eight (8) second**
218 **minimum display time.**