

From: [Anderson, Janelle \(DOT\)](#)
To: [Porter, Susan \(DOT\)](#); [#DOT_DTE](#); [Anderson, Janelle \(DOT\)](#); chris.byrd@co.benton.mn.us; [Colton, Diane \(DOT\)](#); [Dagon, Tiffany \(DOT\)](#); [Howard Preston](#); [Joe Gustafson](#); [Johnson, Kenneth \(DOT\)](#); [Jon Krieg](#); [Lott, Heather \(DOT\)](#); [Mark Sehr](#); [Paul St. Martin](#); [Scott Poska](#); [Thomas Sohrweide](#); [Thompson, Scott \(DOT\)](#); [Tim Plath](#); [Vizecky, Mark \(DOT\)](#); [Wenkel, Kenneth \(DOT\)](#); [William Stein \(william.stein@dot.gov\)](mailto:William.stein@dot.gov); [Buchen, Peter \(DOT\)](#); [Estochen, Bradley \(DOT\)](#); [Johnson, Cory J \(DOT\)](#); [Johnson, Kenneth \(DOT\)](#); [Sheehan, Susan \(DOT\)](#); [Starr, Ray \(DOT\)](#); [Zarling, Susan \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: FW: INFORMATION AND ACTION: MUTCD--Redefinition of Traffic Control Devices
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Fyi.

Janelle Anderson, P.E.
State Tort Claims and Traffic Standards Engineer
Minnesota Department of Transportation
Office of Traffic, Safety, and Technology
1500 County Road B2 West
Roseville, MN 55113
651-234-7388
Janelle.anderson@state.mn.us

From: Sylvester, Kevin (FHWA)
Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2015 12:54 PM
To: MUTCDFIELD
Cc: MUTCDTEAM; Kehrli, Mark (FHWA)
Subject: INFORMATION AND ACTION: MUTCD--Redefinition of Traffic Control Devices
Importance: High

*******INFORMATION AND ACTION*******

MUTCD Field Contacts:

You might have encountered local jurisdictions that have considered enacting ordinances that attempt to redefine the meanings of traffic control devices for certain classes of vehicles. Specifically, the Stop sign and Double Yellow center line pavement marking are most commonly involved. These “redefinitions” or exemptions from the normal meanings can have as much an effect on degrading their meaning—and compliance—as their overuse can. In addition to the safety concerns created by violating the expectancies of the different types of road users, these actions are violations of the meanings prescribed in the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways* (MUTCD).

- **The Stop sign requires all vehicles to come to a stop.** Exempting certain classes of vehicles to simply yield or act otherwise at a Stop sign redefines its meaning as prescribed in the MUTCD. The MUTCD allows Stop signs only where all vehicles on an approach are required to come to a stop. Yielding without a complete stop, a roll-through, or other dynamic action is not a stop.
- **The Double Yellow center line marking prohibits passing (i.e., crossing it**

traveling in the same direction) in most cases. The typical exception is limited to passing a slow-moving vehicle. However, other exemptions contemplated include allowing a motor vehicle to cross the double yellow marking in the same direction to park on the left side of a one-way street that allows counter-flow travel by certain classes of vehicles. In other words, general traffic may travel only in one direction, but a counter-flow preferential lane exists between the general-use lane and the left-side parking lane (parking is in the general traffic direction rather than the counter-flow direction). The counter-flow lane is separated from the general-purpose lane by a double yellow center line marking. The action of crossing a double yellow line in the same direction of travel differs greatly from a turning movement, either into a driveway or perpendicular or angled parking spaces. In most cases, signs are required to prohibit turning movements because the presence of a double yellow marking alone does not prohibit such movements. In conclusion, allowing crossing of the double yellow center line marking to access parking in the same direction, then leaving the parking space to return to the same direction of travel, violates the provisions of the MUTCD. Further, the visibility of the driver parked to the left of counter-flow traffic is restricted, placing both the parked vehicle and counter-flow vehicles in conflict with one another. If counter-flow travel is desired, then that traffic must be placed outside the limits of the one-way general traffic direction that includes left- and right-side parking.

Since the MUTCD is incorporated by reference in the CFR and carries the force of law, either of these actions would violate Federal regulations. Please be cognizant of this fact when reviewing projects that involve violations of the MUTCD.

Please also be proactive in notifying the State upon knowledge of contemplated legislative actions, either at the State or local level, that attempt to redefine the meaning of a traffic control device as prescribed in the National MUTCD. This proactive approach should avoid the need to address non-compliant situations after being implemented or adopted by local jurisdictions.

Please contact me with any questions that arise regarding this matter.

Regards,

Kevin J. Sylvester, P.E., PTOE
Team Leader, Traffic Control Devices

Federal Highway Administration

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE ▪ E86-118 ▪ Washington, DC 20590

Tel.: (202) 366-2161 ▪ E-mail: Kevin.Sylvester@dot.gov ▪ Web: <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/>

