

GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF PORTABLE CHANGEABLE MESSAGE SIGNS (PCMS)

The primary purpose of Portable Changeable Message Signs (PCMS) is to advise the driver of unexpected traffic and routing situations.

Important items when using a Portable Changeable Message Sign are:

General

- A PCMS should be used to supplement conventional signs, pavement marking and lighting.
- If a PCMS is used as an arrow panel, it shall meet all of the requirements of an arrow panel, and shall be used solely as an arrow panel.
- Performance specifications can be found in the current version of the Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MN MUTCD), Part 6, Section 6F.

Messages

- Each display should contain a single thought.
- The entire display should be readable twice at the posted speed limit prior to work starting.
- An accurate description of the work location or the incident location is critical.
- The PCMS shall have readable up-to-date information. Any delay message should accurately reflect the traffic delay time.
- The use of abbreviations is discouraged. The entire word should be spelled out whenever space permits.
- If abbreviations are used, they should be easily understood (see the list of standard abbreviations on Page 6K-xxvi).
- Displays shall not scroll horizontally or vertically across the face of the sign.

Requirements

The specifications for use of a PCMS are in the following table.

Requirements	Type A	Type B	Type C
Line(s) of Message	1 Line	2 Lines	3 Lines
Typical Mounting	Vehicle Mounted	Vehicle or Trailer Mounted	Trailer Mounted
Allowed Usage	Emergency and Incident Mgmt.	Advance Warning	Advance Warning & Advance Notice
Legibility Distance Requirements	Legible at 350 feet	Legible at 750 feet	Legible at 900 feet
Minimum Character Height	10 inch	14 inch	18 inch
Maximum No. of Displays	1	2	* 40 mph or less = 3 * 45 mph or more = 2
Message Cycle	Constant	2 sec. per display, which includes a 0.5 sec. maximum change interval	2 sec. per display, which includes a 0.5 sec. maximum change interval
Minimum Sign Panel Height	5 feet	Vehicle Mounted: 5 feet Trailer Mounted: 7 feet	7 feet
Minimum PCMS Spacing	500 feet	1000 feet	1000 feet

* Posted speed limit prior to work starting.

Specifications for Portable Changeable Message Signs

Table 6F-2

STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS FOR USE ON PORTABLE CHANGEABLE MESSAGE SIGNS

Standard abbreviations easily understood are:

Word	Abbreviation	Word	Abbreviation
Alternate	ALT	Information	INFO
Avenue	AVE	Junction	JCT
Boulevard	BLVD	Left	LFT
Center	CNTR	Parking	PKING
Entrance, Enter	ENT	Road	RD
Expressway	EXPWY	Shoulder	SHLDR
Freeway	FRWY, FWY	Speed	SPD
Highway	HWY	Street	ST

Other abbreviations are easily understood when they appear in conjunction with a particular word commonly associated with it. These words and abbreviations are as follows:

Word	Abbrev.	Prompt	Word	Abbrev.	Prompt
Access	ACCS	Road	Minute(s)	MIN	Number)*
Blocked	BLKD	Lane*	Northbound	NB	Traffic
Bridge	BRDG	Lane*	Prepare	PREP	To Stop
Eastbound	EB	Traffic	Pavement	PVMT	Wet*
Exit	EXT	Next*	Southbound	SB	Traffic
Express	EXP	Lane	Vehicle	VEH	Stalled*
Frontage	FRNT	Road	Westbound	WB	Traffic
Interstate	I	(Number)	Cardinal	N,E,	(Number)
Mile	MI	(Number)*	Direction	S,W	

* = Prompt word given first

The following abbreviations should not be used as they represent several words that could be abbreviated in the same manner:

Abbrev.	Possible Words	Abbrev.	Possible Words
ACC	Accident or Access	PARK	Parking or Park
DLY	Delay or Daily	RED	Reduced or Red
L	Left or Lane	WRNG	Warning or Wrong
LT	Left or Lane		