

PART 1

GENERAL

CHAPTER 1A. GENERAL

Section 1A.07 Responsibility for Traffic Control Devices

Standard:

- 01** The responsibility for the design, placement, operation, maintenance, and uniformity of traffic control devices shall rest with the public agency or the official having jurisdiction, or, in the case of private roads open to public travel, with the private owner or private official having jurisdiction. 23 CFR 655.603 adopts the MUTCD as the national standard for all traffic control devices installed on any street, highway, bikeway, or private road open to public travel (see definition in Section 1A.13). When a State or other Federal agency manual or supplement is required, that manual or supplement shall be in substantial conformance with the National MUTCD.
- 02** 23 CFR 655.603 also states that traffic control devices on all streets, highways, bikeways, and private roads open to public travel in each State shall be in substantial conformance with standards issued or endorsed by the Federal Highway Administrator.

State Highways

- 02A** Responsibility for traffic control devices on state highways in Alaska shall rest with the state and all its political subdivisions that have jurisdiction over highways. AS 19.10.040 and AS 19.10.050 state:
- 02B** “The department (DOT&PF) shall classify, designate, and mark highways under its jurisdiction and shall provide a uniform system of marking and posting these highways. The system of marking and posting shall correlate with and shall, as far as possible, conform to the recommendations of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices as adopted by the American Association of State Highway (and Transportation) Officials.
- 02C** DOT&PF shall prescribe types of traffic control signals to regulate traffic on highways. These signals must correlate with and, as far as possible, conform to the recommendations of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices as adopted by the American Association of State Highway (and Transportation) Officials. The department shall adopt uniform regulations for the placing and installation of traffic control signals.”
- 02D** The required uniform system of marking and posting is defined in the ATM.
- 02E** DOT&PF determines the need for all traffic control devices on state-maintained roads, prepares designs, maintains records, and supervises their installation. These activities may be done by contract with others or by state forces. Traffic control devices that are not in conformance with this standard or that require specific approval for their installation shall not be installed without the approval of the state traffic and safety engineer.
- 02F** As additional specific powers, DOT&PF “may conduct investigations with the assistance of Department of Public Safety and shall determine safe speed limits and safe speed zones on highways and other roadways under its jurisdiction” (AS 19.10.070) and may designate through highways by erecting stop signs on side road approaches (AS 19.10.080). DOT&PF is authorized to make policy for installing, maintaining, and performing all related functions pertaining to traffic control devices on state highways.

Other Highways

- 02G** AS 28.01.010, the Alaska Uniform Traffic Laws Act, states, in part, that a municipality shall “erect necessary official traffic control devices on streets and highways within its jurisdiction that as far as practicable conform to the current edition of the Alaska Traffic Manual prepared by the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.”

Section 1A.08 Authority for Placement of Traffic Control Devices

Standard:

- 01 Traffic control devices, advertisements, announcements, and other signs or messages within the highway right-of-way shall be placed only as authorized by a public authority or the official having jurisdiction, or, in the case of private roads open to public travel, by the private owner or private official having jurisdiction, for the purpose of regulating, warning, or guiding traffic.
- 02 When the public agency or the official having jurisdiction over a street or highway or, in the case of private roads open to public travel, the private owner or private official having jurisdiction, has granted proper authority, others such as contractors and public utility companies shall be permitted to install temporary traffic control devices in temporary traffic control zones. Such traffic control devices shall conform with the Standards of this Manual.
- 03 All regulatory traffic control devices shall be supported by laws, ordinances, or regulations.
- 03A The DOT&PF shall be responsible for erecting and maintaining traffic control devices on state-maintained roads. Municipalities and other entities with highway authority shall be responsible for erecting and maintaining traffic control devices on their roads.

Section 1A.09 Engineering Study and Engineering Judgment

Support:

- 01 Definitions of an engineering study and engineering judgment are contained in Section 1A.13.

Standard:

- 02 **This Manual describes the application of traffic control devices, but shall not be a legal requirement for their installation.**

Guidance:

- 02A *The decision to use a particular device at a particular location should be made on the basis of either an engineering study or the application of engineering judgment. Thus, while this Manual provides Standards, Guidance, and Options for design and application of traffic control devices, this Manual should not be considered a substitute for engineering judgment.*

Section 1A.10 Interpretations, Experimentations, Changes, and Interim Approvals

Standard:

- 01 **Design, application, and placement of traffic control devices other than those adopted in this Manual shall be prohibited unless the provisions of this Section are followed.**
- 01A **To promote the use of uniform, understandable, and effective traffic control devices; to avoid varying official interpretations, and to facilitate the orderly development of traffic control policy, the State Traffic and Safety Engineer shall be the focal point for policy in all matters concerning the ATM.**
- A. **Official interpretations for purposes of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities' practice of these standards shall be made by the State Traffic and Safety Engineer.**
- B. **Those who desire interpretation of a clause in the ATM, a revision to the ATM, or permission to experiment with or use a traffic control device not in the ATM, ASDS, or the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities' Standard Drawings shall submit a written request to the State Traffic and Safety Engineer. The request shall clearly identify the existing standard (if any), and the proposed standard including a complete statement as to how and when it is to be applied, the date, and the name and address of the person making the request.**
- The State Traffic and Safety Engineer shall circulate requests for new traffic control devices and significant changes in policy that can be approved at the state level, such as revisions to text-only signs, to the Regional Traffic and Safety Engineers, the FHWA Alaska Division Safety/Operations Engineer, and the Anchorage and Fairbanks traffic engineers for their input. Responses to the requestor shall be sent within 60 days of receipt of the request.**
- If the request is one that requires interim or experimental approval from the FHWA, the requestor shall send a letter to the State Traffic and Safety Engineer that addresses the requirements listed in**

section 1A.10 of the MUTCD. Upon concurrence, the State Traffic and Safety Engineer shall send the request to the FHWA and distribute the response when received.

- C. Revisions to the MUTCD shall not become part of the ATM until they have been reviewed by the State Traffic and Safety Engineer, any necessary changes have been made to the ATMS, the FHWA has approved those changes, and the State Traffic and Safety Engineer informs users of the adoption of the revised MUTCD.

Section 1A.11 Relation to Other Publications

Standard:

- ⁰¹ To the extent that they are incorporated by specific reference, the latest editions of the following publications, or those editions specifically noted, shall be a part of this Manual: “Standard Highway Signs and Markings (SHSM)” book (FHWA); and “Color Specifications for Retroreflective Sign and Pavement Marking Materials” (appendix to subpart F of Part 655 of Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations).
- ^{01A} The “Alaska Sign Design Specifications (ASDS)” shall be the source document for all signs in the ATM. Where the SHSM is referenced in MUTCD Parts 2 through 9, the reference shall instead be to the ASDS.

Section 1A.12 Color Code

Support:

- ⁰¹ The following color code establishes general meanings for 11 colors of a total of 13 colors that have been identified as being appropriate for use in conveying traffic control information. tolerance limits for each color are contained in 23 CFR Part 655, Appendix to Subpart F and are available at the Federal Highway Administration’s MUTCD website at <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov> or by writing to the FHWA, Office of Safety Research and Development (HRD-T-301), 6300 Georgetown Pike, McLean, VA 22101.
- ⁰² The two colors for which general meanings have not yet been assigned are being reserved for future applications that will be determined only by FHWA after consultation with the States, the engineering community, and the general public. The meanings described in this Section are of a general nature. More specific assignments of colors are given in the individual Parts of this Manual relating to each class of devices.

Standard:

- ⁰³ The general meaning of the 13 colors shall be as follows:
- A. Black—regulation
 - B. Blue—road user services guidance, tourist information, and evacuation route
 - C. Brown—recreational and cultural interest area guidance
 - D. Coral—unassigned
 - E. Fluorescent Pink—incident management
 - F. Fluorescent Yellow-Green—~~pedestrian warning, bicycle warning, playground warning, school bus and school warning~~
All school warning signs shall have fluorescent yellow-green backgrounds, except SCHOOL BUS STOP AHEAD signs (S3-1 or S3-100).
 - G. Green—indicated movements permitted, direction guidance
 - H. Light Blue—unassigned
 - I. Orange—temporary traffic control
 - J. Purple—lanes restricted to use only by vehicles with registered electronic toll collection (ETC) accounts
 - K. Red—stop or prohibition
 - L. White—regulation
 - M. Yellow—warning, pedestrian warning, bicycle warning, and playground warning

Option:

- ^{03A} Fluorescent Yellow-Green may be used for pedestrian warning, bicycle warning, and playground warning signs posted within a designated school zone.
- ^{03B} SCHOOL BUS STOP AHEAD (S3-1 or S3-100) signs may have either a yellow or fluorescent yellow-green background.

Section 1A.13 Definitions of Headings, Words, and Phrases in this Manual

Standard:

⁰¹ When used in this Manual, the text headings of Standard, Guidance, Option, and Support shall be defined as follows:

- A. **Standard**—a statement of required, mandatory, or specifically prohibitive practice regarding a traffic control device. All Standard statements are labeled, and the text appears in bold type. The verb “shall” is typically used. The verbs “should” and “may” are not used in Standard statements. Standard statements are sometimes modified by Options. ~~Standard statements shall not be modified or compromised based on engineering judgment or engineering study.~~
- B. **Guidance**—a statement of recommended, but not mandatory, practice in typical situations, with deviations allowed if engineering judgment or engineering study indicates the deviation to be appropriate. All Guidance statements are labeled, and the text appears in unbold type. The verb “should” is typically used. The verbs “shall” and “may” are not used in Guidance statements. Guidance statements are sometimes modified by Options.
- C. **Option**—a statement of practice that is a permissive condition and carries no requirement or recommendation. Option statements sometime contain allowable modifications to a Standard or Guidance statement. All Option statements are labeled, and the text appears in unbold type. The verb “may” is typically used. The verbs “shall” and “should” are not used in Option statements.
- D. **Support**—an informational statement that does not convey any degree of mandate, recommendation, authorization, prohibition, or enforceable condition. Support statements are labeled, and the text appears in unbold type. The verbs “shall,” “should,” and “may” are not used in Support statements.

⁰² Unless otherwise defined in this Section, or in other Parts of this Manual, words or phrases shall have the meaning(s) as defined in the most recent editions of the “Uniform Vehicle Code,” “AASHTO Transportation Glossary (Highway Definitions),” and other publications mentioned in Section 1A.11.

⁰³ The following words and phrases, when used in this Manual, shall have the following meanings:

[Note: Definitions 1 through 93 are unmodified by this ATMS.]

94. **Intersection**—intersection is defined as follows:

- (a) The area embraced within the prolongation or connection of the lateral curb lines, or if none, the lateral boundary lines of the roadways of two highways that join one another at, or approximately at, right angles, or the area within which vehicles traveling on different highways that join at any other angle might come into conflict.
- (b) The junction of ~~an alley or~~ a driveway with a roadway or highway shall not constitute an intersection, unless the roadway or highway at said junction is controlled by a traffic control device. The junction of an alley with a street or highway is not an intersection (13 AAC 40.010).
- (c) If a highway includes two roadways that are 30 feet or more apart (see definition of Median), then every crossing of each roadway of such divided highway by an intersecting highway shall be a separate intersection.
- (d) If both intersecting highways include two roadways that are 30 feet or more apart, then every crossing of any two roadways of such highways shall be a separate intersection.
- ~~(e) At a location controlled by a traffic control signal, regardless of the distance between the separate intersections as defined in (c) and (d) above:
 - (1) If a stop line, yield line, or crosswalk has not been designated on the roadway (within the median) between the separate intersections, the two intersections and the roadway (median) between them shall be considered as one intersection;
 - (2) Where a stop line, yield line, or crosswalk is designated on the roadway on the intersection approach, the area within the crosswalk and/or beyond the designated stop line or yield line shall be part of the intersection; and
 - (3) Where a crosswalk is designated on a roadway on the departure from the intersection, the intersection shall include the area extending to the far side of such crosswalk.~~

[Note: Definitions 95 through 184 are unmodified by this ATMS.]

185. **School Zone**—a designated roadway segment approaching, adjacent to, and beyond school buildings

or grounds, or along which school related activities occur. School zones, when designated, may have a reduced speed limit, increased fines for speeding or other traffic violations within the zone, and/or a designated school crossing.

[Note: Definitions 186 through 241 are unmodified by this ATMS.]

- 242. Traveled Way**—the portion of the roadway for the movement of vehicles, exclusive of the shoulders, berms, sidewalks, and parking lanes. On two-lane gravel roads or paved roads without striping, the traveled way is considered the 24-foot area centered between hinge points. If the distance between hinge points is 24 feet or less, the traveled way shall be considered 20 feet wide in placement of traffic control devices.

[Note: Definitions 243 through 259 are unmodified by this ATMS.]

[Note: Definitions 260 through 299 are reserved for future MUTCD definitions.]

- 300. Alaska Sign Design Specifications**—The “Alaska Sign Design Specifications (ASDS)” contains drawings showing dimensions, shapes, colors, and other information necessary for laying out the signs that are used in Alaska. The ASDS consists of the “Standard Highway Signs and Markings” book (FHWA) and the “Alaska Sign Design Specifications Supplement”.
- 301. Alaska Traffic Manual**—The Alaska Traffic Manual (ATM) consists of the 2009 Edition of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) dated December 2009, and this Alaska Traffic Manual Supplement (ATMS).
- 302. City Traffic Engineer**—An employee of a local government agency with road jurisdiction who is responsible for traffic control devices.
- 303. Commissioner**—All references to the commissioner herein, not otherwise identified, shall refer to the Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities; the commissioner’s duly authorized agents, representatives, and assigns; and those who by nature of their regular duties or emergency situations are required to act in matters of policy concerning traffic control devices. “Duly authorized” in times of emergency does not relieve anyone of the responsibility of obtaining approvals and authority from the regular authority when the emergency has passed.
- 304. Hinge Point**—The angle point where the top surface of a road intersects a foreslope, typically at the outside edge of the shoulder.
- 305. Regional Traffic and Safety Engineer (RTSE)** —One of three DOT&PF employees with this title. There is one RTSE in the Northern Region (based in Fairbanks), one in the Central Region (based in Anchorage), and one in the Southeast Region (based in Juneau).
- 306. School Area**—The neighborhood and spaces surrounding and including a school and its grounds, including the road and non-road portions of the space. A school area may or may not include a designated school zone.
- 307. Shoulder**—That portion of the roadway outside of the traveled way. Left shoulders on divided roadways are considered part of the median. Shoulders should normally be considered refuge or emergency lanes rather than parking areas.
- 308. State Highways**—All public vehicular ways designated as state highways in accordance with Title 19 of the Alaska Statutes.
- 309. State-Maintained Roads**—The roads maintained by state forces or maintained by others at state expense.
- 310. State Traffic and Safety Engineer (STSE)**—The individual with this title is employed by the Design and Construction Standards Section of the Design and Engineering Services Division of DOT&PF in Juneau.

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