



# National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

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Item Number: 25B-GMI-01

## NCUTCD PROPOSAL FOR CHANGES TO THE MANUAL ON UNIFORM TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES

**COMMITTEE / TASK FORCE:** Guide and Motorist Information Signs Technical Committee  
**ITEM NUMBER:** 25B-GMI-01  
**TOPIC:** Removal of "Shall Be / Shall Not Be Permitted" Statements  
**ORIGIN OF REQUEST:** Guide and Motorist Information Signs TC  
**AFFECTED SECTIONS  
OF MUTCD:** 2A.11, 2D.08, 2E.18, 2E.40, 2I.03, 2K.02

### DEVELOPMENT HISTORY:

Approved by GMITC: .....06/12/2025  
Approved by RWSTC: .....06/12/2025  
Approved by NCUTCD Council: .....

*This is a proposed change to the MUTCD that has been developed by a technical committee, joint committee, or joint task force of the NCUTCD. The NCUTCD is distributing this 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, options, or support. 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 phrases "shall be permitted" and "shall not be permitted" are awkward phrases that conflate a requirement (as implied by the word "shall") with an option (as implied by the word "permitted"). This proposal removes all instances of these phrases from MUTCD Chapters for which the GMI Signs and RW Signs Technical Committees are responsible.

### DISCUSSION:

There are five instances of the phrases "shall be permitted" or "shall not be permitted" throughout Chapters under GMI Signs responsibility and one instance in a RW Signs Chapter. This phrasing appears to identify required or prohibited practices, through the use of the Standard statement, "shall". However, in effect, they are all permissive practices, but without the Option statement "may".

This proposal includes changes to six MUTCD Sections. The proposal removes the six phrases and either provides alternative text (avoiding the use of the word "permitted") or changes the affected language into an Option statement. This proposal will remove all instances of "shall be permitted" or "shall not be permitted."

Council approved proposal 25A-SIG-01 in June 2025, which removed the use of “shall be permitted” and “shall not be permitted” from Part 4. This proposal (25B-GMI-01) extends this concept to Part 2.

The Regulatory and Warning Signs Technical Committee has approved the proposed change in Section 2A.11.

#### **RECOMMENDED MUTCD CHANGES:**

The following present the proposed changes to the current MUTCD within the context of the current MUTCD language. Proposed additions to the MUTCD are shown in blue underline and proposed deletions from the MUTCD are shown in ~~red strikethrough~~. Changes previously approved by NCUTCD Council (but not yet adopted by FHWA) are shown in green double underline for additions and ~~green double strikethrough~~ for deletions. In some cases, background comments may be provided with the MUTCD text. These comments are indicated by [bracketed white text in shaded green]. Deletions made by a technical committee, joint committee, or task force after initial distribution to sponsoring organizations are shown in ~~highlighted red strikethrough and sans-serif text~~. Additions made by a technical committee, joint committee, or task force after initial distribution to sponsoring organizations are shown in underline blue and sans-serif text.

### **Section 2A.11 Enhanced Conspicuity for Standard Signs**

#### **Standard:**

04 Strobe lights shall not be used to enhance the conspicuity of highway signs.

05 If a strip of retroreflective material is used on the sign support, it shall be at least 2 inches in width, it shall be placed for the full length of the support from the sign to within 2 feet above the near edge of the roadway, and its color shall match the background color of the sign, except that the color of the strip for the YIELD and DO NOT ENTER signs shall be red. The retroreflective strip shall not display any legend or other information.

06 For a post-mounted sign installation, ~~placing~~ a duplicate sign in the same assembly facing the same direction of traffic ~~shall not be permitted~~ shall not be used as a method of enhancing conspicuity.

[For brevity, only paragraphs 04 to 06 of Section 2A.11 are shown. The changes proposed in paragraph 06 have no effect on paragraphs 01 to 03.]

### **Section 2D.08 Arrows**

#### **Support:**

01 Arrows are used for lane assignment and to indicate the direction toward designated routes or destinations. Figure 2D-3 shows the various standard arrow designs that have been approved for use on guide signs. Detailed drawings are shown for these arrows in the "Standard Highway Signs" publication (see Section 1A.05).

#### **Standard:**

02 Except for Overhead Arrow-per-Lane signs (see Section 2D.37), on overhead signs where it is desirable to indicate a lane to be followed, a down arrow shall be positioned over the approximate center of the lane and shall point vertically downward toward the approximate center of that lane. Down arrows shall be used only on overhead guide signs that restrict the use of specific lanes to traffic bound for the destination(s) and/or route(s) indicated by these arrows. Down arrows shall not be used unless an arrow can be located over and pointed to the approximate center of each lane that can be used to reach the destination displayed on the sign.

~~If down arrows are used, having more than one down arrow pointing to the same lane on a single overhead sign (or on multiple signs on the same overhead sign structure) shall not be permitted.~~ On an overhead sign assembly, there shall not be more than one down arrow pointing to the same lane.

[For brevity, only paragraphs 01 to 03 of Section 2D.08 are shown. The changes proposed in paragraph 03 have no effect on paragraphs 04 to 26.]

## Section 2E.18 Arrows for Interchange Guide Signs

### Standard:

Arrows used on interchange guide signs shall be of the types shown in Figure 2D-3 and shall comply with the provisions of this Section and Section 2D.08.

Except on Overhead Arrow-per-Lane guide signs (see Section 2E.40) and on Exit Direction signs for lane drops (see Section 2E.28), and except as provided in Paragraph 5 of this Section, directional arrows on all overhead and post-mounted Exit Direction signs shall point diagonally upward. Directional arrows on overhead Exit Direction signs shall be located on the side of the sign consistent with the direction of the exiting movement. Directional arrows on post-mounted Exit Direction signs shall be located at the bottom portion of the sign and centered under the legend.

### Option:

On overhead Exit Direction signs that are located fully over the tapered portion of the exit ramp at the theoretical gore, and where a directional arrow to the side of the legend farthest from the roadway might create an unusually wide sign that limits the road user's view of the arrow, the directional arrow may be placed at the bottom portion of the sign, centered under the legend.

### Standard:

Directional arrows on guide signs for multi-lane exits shall be positioned below the legend over the approximate center of each lane to which the arrow applies (see Figure 2E-38).

Down arrows shall only be used on overhead signs to indicate a lane to be followed and shall be positioned over the approximate center of each lane pointing vertically downward toward the approximate center of that lane. Down arrows shall be used only on overhead guide signs that restrict the use of specific lanes to traffic bound for the destination(s) and/or route(s) indicated by these arrows. Down arrows shall not be used unless an arrow can be located over and pointed to the approximate center of each lane that can be used to reach the destination displayed on the sign.

~~If down arrows are used, having more than one down arrow pointing to the same lane on a single overhead sign (or on multiple signs on the same overhead sign structure) shall not be permitted.~~ On an overhead sign assembly, there shall not be more than one down arrow pointing to the same lane.

### Support:

Directional and down arrows for use on guide signs are shown in Figure 2D-3. Detailed drawings and standardized sizes based on ranges of letter heights for these arrows are provided in the "Standard Highway Signs" publication (see Section 1A.05). Information on the dimensions for arrows used in Overhead Arrow-per-Lane and Diagrammatic Advance guide signing is also provided in the "Standard Highway Signs" publication (see Section 1A.05).

129 **Section 2E.40 Design of Overhead Arrow-per-Lane Guide Signs for Option Lanes**

130 Support:

131 01 Overhead Arrow-per-Lane guide signs (see Figure 2E-35) are used where an option lane is present at  
132 freeway and expressway multi-lane exit interchanges and splits. They display an upward-pointing arrow  
133 above each lane that conveys the direction(s) of travel that the lane serves at the point of departure. At  
134 locations where an option lane is present at a multi-lane exit or split, Overhead Arrow-per-Lane guide  
135 signs have been shown to be superior to other guide sign designs because they convey positive direction  
136 about which destination and direction each approach lane serves, particularly for the option lane, which is  
137 otherwise difficult to clearly sign.

138 **Standard:**

139 02 Overhead Arrow-per-Lane guide signs as provided in Section 2E.39 shall be used at all new or  
140 reconstructed freeway and expressway locations and at freeway and expressway locations where  
141 replacement of existing sign support structures is necessitated by reconstruction. The Overhead  
142 Arrow-per-Lane guide sign at the exit or split shall be located at or in the immediate vicinity of the  
143 point where the exiting lanes begin to diverge from the through lanes or, for a split, at the point  
144 where the approach lanes begin to diverge from one another, preserving the relation of the arrows  
145 displayed on the sign to their respective lanes. The Overhead Arrow-per-Lane guide sign at the exit  
146 shall not be located at or near the theoretical gore.

147 Option:

148 03 At existing or non-reconstructed locations where an overhead Exit Direction sign exists at the  
149 theoretical gore, and the existing sign support structure is retained, an overhead Exit Direction sign may  
150 continue to be used on the existing sign support structure in conjunction with a replacement of the advance  
151 signs using the Overhead Arrow-per-Lane guide sign design.

152 **Standard:**

153 04 If an existing Exit Direction sign is being retained at an interchange as provided in Paragraph 3  
154 of this Section, an Overhead Arrow-per-Lane guide sign shall not be used at the location of the Exit  
155 Direction sign at or in the vicinity of the theoretical gore. New installations of Exit Direction and  
156 Pull-Through signs shall not be ~~permitted~~ used in conjunction with Overhead Arrow-per-Lane  
157 guide signs on new or reconstructed facilities.

158 [For brevity, only paragraphs 01 to 04 of Section 2E.40 are shown. The change proposed in  
159 paragraph 04 has no effect on paragraphs 05 to 14.]

160

161 **Section 2I.02 General Service Signs for Conventional Roads**

162 **Standard:**

163 08 General Service signs, if used at intersections, shall be accompanied by a directional message.

164 Option:

165 09 The Advance Turn (M5 series) or Directional Arrow (M6 series) auxiliary plaques (see Figure 2I-1) with  
166 white arrows on blue backgrounds may be used with General Service symbol signs to create a General  
167 Service directional assembly.

168 10 The General Service sign legends may be either symbols or word messages.

169 **Standard:**

170 11 Symbols and word message General Service legends shall not be intermixed on the same sign.

171 [For brevity, only paragraphs 08 to 11 of Section 2I.02 are shown. There are no changes in  
172 Section 2I.02. Paragraph 10 above is shown to provide context for the proposed change  
173 in Section 2I.03, below.]

174

175 **Section 2I.03 General Service Signs for Freeways and Expressways**

176 Support:

177 01 General Service (D9-18 series) signs (see Figure 2I-3) are generally not appropriate at major  
178 interchanges (see definition in Section 2E.11) and in urban areas.

179 **Standard:**

180 02 General Service signs shall have a white legend and border on a blue background. Letter and  
181 numeral sizes shall comply with the minimum requirements of Tables 2E-2 through 2E-5. ~~All~~  
182 ~~approved symbols shall be permitted as alternatives to word messages, but symbols and word~~  
183 ~~service messages shall not be intermixed on the same sign.~~ If the services are not visible from the  
184 ramp of a single-exit interchange, the service signing shall be repeated in smaller size at the  
185 intersection of the exit ramp and the crossroad. Such service signs shall use arrows to indicate the  
186 direction to the services.

187 Option:

188 02a The General Service sign legends may be either symbols or word messages.

189 Standard:

190 02b Symbols and word message General Service legends shall not be intermixed on the same sign.

191 **[For brevity, only current paragraphs 01 to 02 of Section 2I.03 are shown. The changes**  
192 **proposed in paragraphs 02, 02a and 02b have no effect on paragraphs 03 to 26.]**

193

194 **Section 2K.02 Design**

195 **Standard:**

196 01 Tourist-oriented directional sign assemblies shall have one or more signs (see Figure 2K-1) for  
197 the purpose of displaying the business identification of and directional information for eligible  
198 facilities. Except as provided in Paragraph 7 of this Section, each sign shall be rectangular in shape  
199 and shall have a white legend and border on a blue background.

200 02 The content of the legend on each sign shall be limited to the identification and directional  
201 information for no more than one eligible business, service, or activity facility. The legends shall not  
202 include promotional advertising.

203 *Guidance:*

204 03 Each sign should have a maximum of two lines of legend including no more than one symbol (see  
205 Paragraph 4 of this Section), a separate directional arrow, and the distance to the facility displayed  
206 beneath the arrow. Arrows pointing to the left or up should be at the extreme left of the sign panel. Arrows  
207 pointing to the right should be at the extreme right of the sign panel. Symbols, when used, should be to the  
208 left of the word legend or business identification sign panel (see Paragraphs 6 and 9 of this Section).

209 *Option:*

210 04 The General Service sign symbols (see Section 2I.02) and the symbols for recreational and cultural  
211 interest area signs (see Chapter 2M) may be used on tourist-oriented directional signs.

212 05 Based on engineering judgment, the hours of operation may be displayed on the sign.

213 06 Business identification sign panels (see Section 2J.03) for specific businesses, services, and activities  
214 may be used in place of word legends on tourist-oriented direction signs.

215 **Standard:**

216 07 When used, recreational and cultural interest area symbols shall be white on a brown  
217 background.

218 08 When used, symbols shall be an appropriate size (see Section 2K.04).

219 09 When used, business identification sign panels shall not exceed 24 inches in width and 15 inches  
220 in height. ~~Logos resembling official traffic control devices shall not be permitted.~~ A logo that  
221 resembles an official traffic control device shall not be used.  
222 [For brevity, only paragraphs 01 to 09 of Section 2K.02 are shown. The changes proposed  
223 in paragraph 09 have no effect on paragraphs 10 to 12.]