National Committee on
Uniform Traffic Control Devices

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Item Number: 26B-RW-01

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

COMMITTEE / TASK FORCE:	Regulatory and Warning Sign Technical Committee
ITEM NUMBER:	26B-RW-01
TOPIC:	Mandatory Movement Lane Control Signs
ORIGIN OF REQUEST:	RW Lane Designation Sign TF
AFFECTED SECTIONS OF MUTCD:	2B.28, 2B.44

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY:
Approved by RWSTC: 06/24/2026
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:
This proposal reinstates the allowance to post-mount the Right (Left) Only (R3-5) symbol sign, under certain conditions, to enhance comprehension and increase uniformity. Post-mounting the sign is prohibited in the 11th Edition.

DISCUSSION:
The 2003 and 2009 Editions of the MUTCD allowed the Right (Left) Only (R3-5) symbol sign to be post-mounted. Accompanying the allowance were Standard and Guidance statements for the sign's use. In the 2003 Edition, a supplemental plaque such as RIGHT LANE was required if the sign faced a multilane approach. The 2009 Edition changed this requirement to a Guidance statement, but disallowed post-mounting the sign if the approach had three or more through lanes.

The 11th Edition disallows post-mounting the R3-5 sign by establishing a Standard that only allows the sign to be mounted overhead. A new RIGHT (LEFT) TURN ONLY (R4-21) text sign was created as a replacement for relaying the same message in post-mounted fashion.

It is widely accepted that symbol signs established through proper research or experimentation are preferred over word message signs. Past research supports this, including the 2022 *Comprehension and Legibility of Selected Symbol Signs Phase IV (Publication No. FHWA-HRT-22-088)* which lists numerous benefits to symbol signs over word messages. Additionally, the 11th Edition states in part,

"Where the legend of a standard sign is a symbol…an alternative word legend shall not be allowed in place of the symbol, except as otherwise provided in this Manual" (Section 2A.04.12).

Responding to a questionnaire about the current use of the R3-5 sign in post-mounted applications, 15 respondents across 12 states provided 45 example locations where the sign is used. In the examples, the sign is used:

- Adjacent to auxiliary turn lanes
- Under stop signs where the only allowable movement is a right (left) turn
- Across from a stop condition where the only allowable movement is a right turn
- On the near side of a traffic signal where the only allowable movement is a right turn
- To the right of a channelized approach becoming an added lane on the intersecting roadway
- In the nose of a channelizing island where the only allowable movement is a right turn

The most common use for the sign, regardless of sign placement, is facing the approach of an intersection where the only allowable movement is a right (left) turn. With the introduction of the R4-21 text sign in the 11th Edition, these R3-5 signs may simply be replaced over time to accomplish the same purpose. However, there are benefits to the use of a symbol sign over a word message sign. By revising language in the MUTCD, the symbol sign benefits can be realized while increasing uniformity in the R3-5 sign's use.

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.

PART 2
SIGNS

CHAPTER 2B. REGULATORY SIGNS, BARRICADES, AND GATES

Section 2B.28 Mandatory Movement Lane Control Signs (R3-5, R3-5a, R3-7, R3-19 Series, and R3-20) and Plaques

Standard:

01 Mandatory Movement Lane Control (R3-5, R3-5a, and R3-7) signs (see Figure 2B-4), if used, shall indicate only the single vehicle movement that is required from the lane.

02 The Mandatory Movement Lane Control (R3-5 and R3-5a) symbol signs shall include the legend ONLY and shall be mounted overhead over the specific lanes to which they apply (see Section 2B.27) or post-mounted adjacent to a single-lane approach where all traffic must proceed in the direction indicated. The R3-7 sign shall be for post-mounting only. The R3-5, R3-5a, and R3-7 signs shall not be mounted at the far side of the intersection.

03 When the mandatory movement applies to lanes exclusively designated for HOV traffic, the HOV 2+ (R3-5cP) supplemental plaque shall be used. When the mandatory movement applies to lanes that are not

HOV facilities, but are lanes exclusively designated for buses and/or taxis, the TAXI LANE (R3-5dP) and/or BUS LANE (R3-5gP) supplemental plaques shall be used.

04 **If used, the Mandatory Movement Lane Control (R3-7) sign shall be located in advance of the intersection, such as near the upstream end of the mandatory movement lane, and/or at the near side of the intersection where the regulation applies.**

Guidance:

05 The use of the Mandatory Movement Lane Control (R3-7) word message sign should be limited to only locations that are adjacent to the full-width portion of a mandatory turn lane. The R3-7 sign should not be installed adjacent to a through lane in advance of a turn bay taper or adjacent to a turn bay taper.

06 Mandatory Movement Lane Control signs should be accompanied by lane-use arrow markings, especially where traffic volumes are high, where there is a high percentage of commercial vehicles, or where other distractions exist.

07 Where the restriction does not apply to buses or bicycles an EXCEPT BUSES (R3-7aP) or EXCEPT BICYCLES (R3-7bP) plaque should be used.

Option:

07a The Mandatory Movement Lane Control (R3-5 and R3-5a) symbol signs may be mounted below a STOP or YIELD sign or on the approach to an intersection.

08 The Through Only (R3-5a) sign may be used to require a road user in a particular lane to proceed straight through an intersection.

09 The diamond symbol may be used instead of the word message HOV on the R3-5cP supplemental plaque.

10 Where a mandatory left or U-turn lane is added at a median location, a LANE FOR LEFT TURN ONLY (R3-19) or LANE FOR U TURN ONLY (R3-19a) sign may be post-mounted on the median at the beginning of the taper. Where a U turn and a left turn are both allowed, a LANE FOR U AND LEFT TURNS ONLY (R3-19b) sign may be used. Where a R3-19 series sign is used, Mandatory Movement Lane Control signs along the turn lane in the median may be omitted.

11 The R3-19 series signs may be used where the added median turn lane is separated from the through lanes by a channelizing or divisional island.

12 On an approach to a mandatory turn lane where traffic regularly enters the shoulder to access the turn lane inappropriately, creating safety or operational issues, a DO NOT DRIVE ON SHOULDER (R4-17) sign (see Section 2B.43) may be used to supplement the standard Mandatory Movement Lane Control (R3-5 and/or R3-7 series) signs.

Section 2B.44 ALL TRAFFIC Sign (R4-20) and RIGHT (LEFT) TURN ONLY Sign (R4-21)

Option:

01 The ALL TRAFFIC (R4-20) sign may be used at an intersection where all traffic on the approach to the intersection must turn in the direction indicated and the Movement Prohibition (see Section 2B.26) and/or ONE WAY (see Section 2B.49) signs do not adequately convey the allowable direction of travel.

02 The RIGHT (LEFT) TURN ONLY (R4-21) sign may be used at or on an approach to an intersection where all traffic on that approach must turn in the direction indicated.

Guidance:

03 The RIGHT (LEFT) TURN ONLY sign should not be used for a channelized turn lane separated from the adjacent travel lanes by an island.

Standard:

04 The ALL TRAFFIC sign shall not be used to substitute for the Keep Right (R4-7 series) or Keep Left (R4-8 series) signs.

05 The RIGHT (LEFT) TURN ONLY sign shall not be used to substitute for the Mandatory Movement Lane Control (R3-7) word message sign~~s~~ (see Sections 2B.27 and 2B.28).