



National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

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Item No.: 24B-EDT-01

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

COMMITTEE / TASK FORCE: Edit Committee
ITEM NUMBER: 24B-EDT-01
TOPIC: Scope, Applicability, and Purpose of the MUTCD
ORIGIN OF REQUEST: MUTCD 11th Edition Final Rule Preamble
AFFECTED SECTIONS OF MUTCD: Section 1A.01

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY:

Approved by Edit Committee: 05/28/2024
Approved by NCUTCD Council:

This is a proposal for recommended changes to the MUTCD that has been developed by a technical committee or joint task force of the NCUTCD. The NCUTCD is distributing it 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, or options. 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 is to add new language in Section 1A.01 of the 11th Edition of the MUTCD to describe what the MUTCD is and is not intended to be.

DISCUSSION:

In the Federal Register preamble for the December 19, 2023, final rule for the 11th edition of the MUTCD,¹ the FHWA included a discussion regarding what the MUTCD is and is not intended to be. A significant number of comments to docket for the Notice of Proposed Amendments contained indicated a mistaken belief that the MUTCD governs geometric design of roads and streets, design or character of communities, prioritization of one mode of travel over other modes, and other factors other than traffic control devices. The FHWA's discussion in the final rule preamble very clearly explains what the MUTCD controls and what it does not. The NCUTCD Edit Committee believes that similar wording should be inserted into Section 1A.01 as additional Support text, to help MUTCD users better understand this issue.

¹ <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2023-12-19/pdf/2023-27178.pdf>

36 **RECOMMENDED MUTCD CHANGES:**

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

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49 **PART 1. GENERAL**

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51 **CHAPTER 1A. GENERAL**

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53 **Section 1A.01 Scope, Applicability, and Purpose of the MUTCD**

54 Support:

55 01 The scope of the MUTCD is limited to traffic control devices: the signs, signals, and markings, and
56 how they appear, operate, and are used. The MUTCD is not a road design manual nor is it a
57 comprehensive safety manual. It is not a policy or directive on the design or character of communities or
58 the geometric design of roads. The MUTCD also is not intended to prioritize any particular travel mode
59 or to influence land use or access by any mode of travel. Such policies are determined by relevant State
60 and local authorities and roadway owners.

61 02 Following determination of road design and intended use, the MUTCD governs how traffic control
62 devices communicate directly with road users about how the road network is intended to be navigated
63 safely and efficiently, within the context and constraints of the road's physical space, design features, and
64 surrounding environment.

65 ~~0103~~ The purpose of the MUTCD is to establish uniform national criteria for the use of traffic control
66 devices that meet the needs and expectancy of road users on all streets, highways, pedestrian and bicycle
67 facilities, and site roadways open to public travel.

68 ~~0204~~ This purpose is achieved through the following objectives:
69 A. Promote safety, inclusion, and mobility for all users of the road network;
70 B. Promote efficiency through creating national uniformity in the meaning and appearance of
71 traffic control devices;
72 C. Promote national consistency in the use, installation, and operation of traffic control devices;
73 and
74 D. Provide basic principles for traffic engineers to use in making decisions regarding the use,
75 installation, operation, maintenance, and removal of traffic control devices.

76 ~~0305~~ Uniformity of the meaning of traffic control devices is vital to their effectiveness. Uniformity
77 means treating similar situations in a similar way. Uniformity of devices simplifies the task of the road
78 user because it aids in recognition and understanding, thereby reducing perception/reaction time.
79 Uniformity assists road users, law enforcement officers, and traffic courts by giving everyone the same
80 interpretation. Uniformity assists public highway officials through efficiency in manufacture, installation,
81 maintenance, and administration.

82 ~~0406~~ The use of uniform traffic control devices also requires uniform and appropriate application.

83 ~~0507~~ The applicability of the MUTCD to facilities open to public travel is independent of the type of
84 ownership or jurisdiction (public or private) and the source of funding (Federal, State, local, or private).

85 ~~0608~~ This Manual presumes the user of the MUTCD has sufficient working knowledge, professional
86 training and experience, and education in the principles of traffic engineering. Other resources can be
87 consulted to understand the basis for decisions that are made in which engineering study or judgment will
88 be applied.