



National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

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Item No.: 25A-RW-01

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

COMMITTEE / TASK FORCE: Regulatory and Warning Signs Technical Committee
ITEM NUMBER: 25A-RW-01
TOPIC: School Zone When Flashing for CAV
ORIGIN OF REQUEST: Signs For CAV – CAV Joint Task Force (Randy McCourt-RW, Terry Haukom-GMI, Roxane Mukai-GMI, Steve Alpert – GMI, Amanda Hamm-BTC)
AFFECTED SECTIONS OF MUTCD: 7B.05

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY:

Approved by RWSTC: 01/08/2025
Approved by CAVJTF 01/08/2025
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:

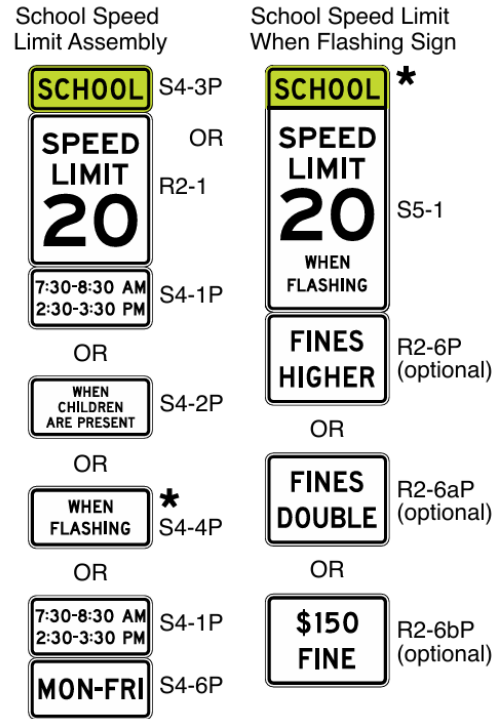
The practice of utilizing hour, day and “when children present” text plaques to define the presence of a school speed limit for a School Speed Limit Assembly (Figure 7B-1) is inconsistent with 11th Edition MUTCD language in Part 5. To clarify intent, a new support statement is proposed for Part 7.

DISCUSSION:

The 11th Edition of the MUTCD includes a new road user (automated vehicles). The need for uniformity and consistency in sign applications are a key aspect of driving automation systems (Section 5A.04). In Part 7 the use of school speed limit assemblies offers at least four options to address the periods of the day that the speed limit applies. In 1971 when school speed limit signs first were introduced to the MUTCD, states had (and continue today) with various laws regarding school zone speed limits and required signing. This has resulted in various applications using the options afforded in the MUTCD.

36 The various plaques (S4-1P, 4-2P, S4-4P and S4-1P
 37 with S4-6P) all approach the definition of when the
 38 speed limit is in effect in different manners. For a human
 39 driver, understanding what “when children are present”
 40 means may be interpreted but for driving automation
 41 systems (DAS) it may be nearly impossible. The
 42 unwritten understanding of 7:30-8:30 AM during school
 43 days is a common understanding but DAS requires
 44 literal interpretation. Even MON-FRI (during summer)
 45 requires interpretation that to be defined for every
 46 circumstance and school district (and those with ball
 47 fields and parks) creates lack of clarity. This is
 48 inconsistent with Chapter 5 of the MUTCD 11th Edition
 49 (Section 5A.04 P06A and 5B.01, P03A) where guidance
 50 calls for:

- 51
- 52 • Applying uniform and consistent traffic control
- 53 devices on each type of roadway, and applying
- 54 a similar approach to traffic control at similar
- 55 locations in similar situations.
- 56 • Clearly associating the sign application with the
- 57 displayed message to the specific road to
- 58 which it applies with different speed limits or
- 59 restrictions.
- 60



61 The “when flashing” application does not suffer from these shortcomings and should be
 62 emphasized. While it is not the intent to change all state laws, if the MUTCD is to be the
 63 guidance for all road users (including DAS) the priorities and emphasis of applications should be
 64 reflected in the Part 7 text. This proposal seeks to place the order and priority of the School
 65 Speed Limit When Flashing Sign and the School Speed Limit Assembly so as to:

- 66
- 67 1. Emphasize the preferred application for all road users first
- 68 2. Clarifying support for the preferred application
- 69 3. Retaining existing language for other options, as part of the transition to eventual
- 70 uniformity as State laws evolve.
- 71
- 72

73 **RECOMMENDED MUTCD CHANGES:**

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

84
85 **PART 7. TRAFFIC CONTROL FOR SCHOOL AREAS**

86
87 **CHAPTER 7B. SIGNS**

88
89 **Section 7B.05 School Speed Limit Signs and Plaques**

90 **Standard:**

91 01 A School Speed Limit assembly (see Figure 7B-1) or a School Speed Limit When Flashing
92 (S5-1) sign (see Figure 7B-1) shall be used to indicate the speed limit where a reduced school speed
93 limit zone has been established based upon an engineering study or where a reduced school speed
94 limit is specified for such areas by statute. The School Speed Limit assembly or School Speed Limit
95 When Flashing sign shall be placed at or as near as practicable to the point where the reduced
96 school speed limit zone begins (see Figures 7B-2 and 7B-4).

97 02 If a reduced school speed limit zone has been established, a School (S1-1) sign shall be installed
98 in advance (see Table 2C-3 for advance placement guidelines) of the first School Speed Limit sign
99 assembly or S5-1 sign that is encountered in each direction as traffic approaches the reduced school
100 speed limit zone (see Figures 7B-2 and 7B-4).

101 03 Except as provided in Paragraph 4 of this Section, the downstream end of an authorized and
102 posted reduced school speed limit zone shall be identified with an END SCHOOL SPEED LIMIT
103 (S5-3) sign (see Figures 7B-1, 7B-2, and 7B-4).

104 **Option:**

105 04 If a reduced school speed limit zone ends at the same point as a designated school zone (see Section
106 7B.02), an END SCHOOL ZONE (S5-2) sign may be used instead of an END SCHOOL SPEED LIMIT
107 (S5-3) sign. A standard Speed Limit sign showing the speed limit for the section of highway that is
108 downstream from the authorized and posted reduced school speed limit zone may be mounted on the
109 same post above the END SCHOOL SPEED LIMIT (S5-3) sign or the END SCHOOL ZONE (S5-2)
110 sign.

111 **Guidance:**

112 05 *The beginning point of a reduced school speed limit zone should be at least 200 feet in advance of*
113 *the school grounds or a school crossing; however, this 200-foot distance should be increased if the*
114 *reduced school speed limit is 30 mph or higher. The maximum beginning point of a reduced school speed*
115 *limit zone should not be greater than 500 feet in advance of the school grounds or a school crossing.*

116 **Standard:**

117 [Switch locations of paragraphs 6 and 7 to follow paragraph 8 to emphasize its
118 application & add support statement related to CAV]

119 ~~06 The School Speed Limit assembly shall be either a static sign assembly, a blank-out sign, or a~~
120 ~~changeable message sign (see Chapter 2L).~~

121 ~~07 The static School Speed Limit assembly shall consist of a top plaque (S4-3P) with the legend~~
122 ~~SCHOOL, a Speed Limit (R2-1) sign, and a bottom plaque (S4-1P, S4-2P, S4-4P, or S4-6P)~~
123 ~~indicating the specific periods of the day and/or days of the week that the special school speed limit~~
124 ~~is in effect (see Figure 7B-1).~~

125 **0806 When a School Speed Limit When Flashing (S5-1) sign or a Speed Limit (R2-1) sign**
126 **with a supplemental WHEN FLASHING (S4-4P) plaque is used, a Speed Limit Sign**
127 **Beacon (see Section 4S.04) shall be used to identify the periods that the school speed limit is**
128 **in effect (see Sections 2A.12 and 4S.03).**

129 Support:

130 06a Blank-out signs, changeable message signs and Speed Limit Sign Beacons with WHEN FLASHING
131 (S4-4P) plaques support driving automation systems by clear, simple meaning of when the school speed
132 limit is in effect (see Section 5B.01).

133 Standard:

134 **0607 The School Speed Limit assembly shall be either a static sign assembly, a blank-out sign, or a**
135 **changeable message sign (see Chapter 2L).**

136 **0708 The static School Speed Limit assembly (see Figure 7B-1) shall consist of a top plaque (S4-3P)**
137 **with the legend SCHOOL, a Speed Limit (R2-1) sign, and a bottom plaque (S4-1P, S4-2P, S4-4P,**
138 **or S4-1P with a S4-6P). The bottom plaque(s) shall indicate the specific conditions that address**
139 **when the special school speed limit is in effect.**

140 **09 Fluorescent yellow-green pixels shall be used when the “SCHOOL” message is displayed on a**
141 **changeable message sign for a school speed limit.**

142 Option:

143 **10 Changeable message signs may use blank-out messages or other methods in order to display the**
144 **school speed limit only during the periods it applies.**

145 **11 A Vehicle Speed Feedback (W13-20aP) plaque that displays the speed of approaching drivers (see**
146 **Sections 2B.21 and 2C.13), that is part of a School Speed Limit assembly or a School Speed Limit When**
147 **Flashing (S5-1) sign, may be used in a school speed limit zone.**

148 Guidance:

149 **12 *If used, the Vehicle Speed Feedback (W13-20aP) plaque should only be used during the time period***
150 ***when the school speed limit is in effect.***

151 **13 *A Reduced School Speed Limit Ahead (S4-5 or S4-5a) sign (see Figure 7B-1) should be used to***
152 ***inform road users of a reduced speed zone where the speed limit is being reduced by more than 10 mph,***
153 ***or where engineering judgment indicates that advance notice would be appropriate.***

154 Standard:

155 **14 *If used, the Reduced School Speed Limit Ahead sign shall be followed by a School Speed Limit***
156 ***sign or a School Speed Limit assembly.***

157 **15 *The speed limit displayed on the Reduced School Speed Limit Ahead sign shall be identical to***
158 ***the speed limit displayed on the subsequent School Speed Limit sign or School Speed Limit***
159 ***assembly.***