NCUTCD Proposal for Changes to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE: Regulatory/Warning Signs Technical Committee
ITEM NUMBER: 16B-RW-03
TOPIC Section 2C.04, Size of Warning Signs
ORIGIN OF REQUEST: Gerard Gerhard letters of June 23, 2014 and November 2, 2015
Task Force: Dan Paddick (Chair), Tom Heydel, Andy Ramish, Erin Kissner, Herman Hill, Jason Kennedy, Doug Bartlett, Bruce Ibarguen, Jim Pline, Robert Weber, Paul Carlson

AFFECTED SECTIONS OF MUTCD: Section 2C.04, Size of Warning signs

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY: Task Force: 5-6-16, revised 12-13-16

- Approved by Technical Committee: 06/09/2016
- Approved by RWSTC following sponsor comments: 01/04/2017
- Approved by NCUTCD Council: 01/06/2017

This is a proposal for recommended changes to the MUTCD that has been approved by the NCUTCD Council. This proposal does not represent a revision of the MUTCD and does not constitute official MUTCD standards, guidance, or options. It 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:

On June 23, 2014, Mr. Gerard Gerhard of Lexington, Kentucky wrote to the Director of Office of Transportation Operations of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The letter had 22 numbered sections recommending changes to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). He followed this up with a November 2, 2015 letter to Mr. William Lambert, Chair of the Regulatory and Warning Sign Technical
Committee (RWSTC) of the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (NCUTCD). This letter contained two more comments recommending changes.

The FHWA had transmitted the original letter to the NCUTCD for consideration. The NCUTCD assigned the overview of these letters to the RWSTC because the majority of the issues related to Regulatory and Warning Signs.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Gerhard addresses two concerns (Gerhard item # 7) that he has with Section 2C.04, Size of Warning signs. He writes:

“Section 2C.04, Size of Warning Signs

A) Amend Section 2C.04, Size of Warning Signs (2009 MUTCD), Standard, Paragraph 01, to add “and 2A.15.” Upon amendment, Paragraph 01 of Section 2C.04 would read:

Except as provided in Section 2A.11 and 2A.15, the sizes for warning signs shall be as shown in Table 2C-2.

B) Amend Section 2C.04, Size of Warning Signs (2009 MUTCD), Paragraph 05, Option, so that, upon amendment, Paragraph 05 of Section 2C.04 will read:

Guidance:

If a diamond shaped warning sign is placed on the left-hand side of a highway to supplement the installation of the same warning sign on the right-hand side of the roadway, the sign placed on the left-hand side of the highway shall be the same size as the sign on the right-hand side of the highway.” (End of Quote)

Mr. Gerhard has two suggestions within this comment. The first is that he believes that Paragraph 01 should be amended to also reference Section 2A.15 along with Section 2A.11. Section 2A.15 allows, based on engineering judgment, the use of larger size signs to increase conspicuity.

The RWSTC believes that Section 2A.15 should be referenced in Paragraph 06 rather than in Paragraph 01. This Paragraph directly addresses the use of larger signs.

Mr. Gerhard’s second comment is an amendment of Paragraph 05. This Paragraph addresses the use of a smaller size sign for a supplemental sign on the left side of a
multi-lane roadway. It does not address any other roadway types or roadway situations. Mr. Gerhard changes the title of the Paragraph from an Option to a Guidance statement. However he writes it as a Standard by using “Shall”. He also changes the statement from relating to multi-lane roadways to all roadways.

Section 2A.15B already requires that the supplemental sign on the left side of a roadway be identical to the sign on the right side. This change is not necessary. It would be redundant with Section 2A.15B.

The RWSTC believes that there are situations where a smaller size sign may be appropriate on the left side of multi-lane roadways. An example of this would be a narrow median where the width of a wider sign might encroach on the shoulder.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Section 2A.15 will be referenced in Paragraph 06. This Paragraph directly addresses the use of larger signs.

We do not agree with Mr. Gerhard’s comment that Paragraph 05 of Section 2C.04 needs to be amended.

**RECOMMENDED WORDING:**

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 [highlighted light blue in brackets].

**PART 2. SIGNS**

**CHAPTER 2C. WARNING SIGNS AND OBJECT MARKERS**

**Section 2C.04 Size of Warning Signs**

**Standard:**

*01 Except as provided in Section 2A.11 the sizes for warning signs shall be as shown in Table 2C-2.*

**Support:**

*02 Section 2A.11 contains information regarding the applicability of the various columns in Table 2C-2.*

**Standard:**
Except as provided in Paragraph 5, the minimum size for all diamond-shaped warning signs facing traffic on a multi-lane conventional road where the posted speed limit is higher than 35 mph shall be 36 x 36 inches.

The minimum size for supplemental warning plaques that are not included in Table 2C-2 shall be as shown in Table 2C-3.

Option:

If a diamond-shaped warning sign is placed on the left-hand side of a multi-lane roadway to supplement the installation of the same warning sign on the right-hand side of the roadway, the minimum size identified in the Single Lane column in Table 2C-2 may be used.

Signs and plaques larger than those shown in Tables 2C-2 and 2C-3 may be used (see Section 2A.11 and Section 2A.15).

Guidance:

The minimum size for all diamond-shaped warning signs facing traffic on exit and entrance ramps should be the size identified in Table 2C-2 for the mainline roadway classification (Expressway or Freeway). If a minimum size is not provided in the Freeway Column, the Expressway size should be used. If a minimum size is not provided in the Freeway or the Expressway Column, the Oversized size should be used.

Section 2A.15 Enhanced Conspicuity for Standard Signs

Option:

Based upon engineering judgment, where the improvement of the conspicuity of a standard regulatory, warning, or guide sign is desired, any of the following methods may be used, as appropriate, to enhance the sign’s conspicuity (see Figure 2A-1):

A. Increasing the size of a standard regulatory, warning, or guide sign.
B. Doubling-up of a standard regulatory, warning, or guide sign by adding a second identical sign on the lefthand side of the roadway.
C. Adding a solid yellow or fluorescent yellow rectangular “header panel” above a standard regulatory sign, with the width of the panel corresponding to the width of the standard regulatory sign. A legend of “NOTICE,” “STATE LAW,” or other appropriate text may be added in black letters within the header panel for a period of time determined by engineering judgment. (And so forth.)