



# National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

13236 North 7th Street, Suite 4-259, Phoenix, Arizona 85022  
Phone/Text: 231-4-NCUTCD (231-462-8823)  
E-mail: secretary@ncutcd.org Website: <https://ncutcd.org>

Item No.: 24B-EDT-01

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

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

### DEVELOPMENT HISTORY:

Approved by Edit Committee: 05/28/2024 and 11/14/2024  
Approved by NCUTCD Council: 01/10/2025

*This is a recommended change 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:

This proposal is to add new language in Section 1A.01 of the 11<sup>th</sup> 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 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the MUTCD,<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

35 **RECOMMENDED MUTCD CHANGES:**

36 The following present the proposed changes to the current MUTCD within the context of the  
37 current MUTCD language. Proposed additions to the MUTCD are shown in blue underline and  
38 proposed deletions from the MUTCD are shown in ~~red strikethrough~~. Changes previously  
39 approved by NCUTCD Council (but not yet adopted by FHWA) are shown in green double  
40 underline for additions and ~~green double strikethrough~~ for deletions. In some cases,  
41 background comments may be provided with the MUTCD text. These comments are indicated  
42 by [bracketed white text in shaded green].

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45 **PART 1. GENERAL**

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47 **CHAPTER 1A. GENERAL**

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49 **Section 1A.01 Purpose and Scope of the MUTCD**

50 Support:

51 01 The purpose of the MUTCD is to establish uniform national criteria for the use of traffic control  
52 devices that meet the needs and expectancy of road users on all streets, highways, pedestrian and bicycle  
53 facilities, and site roadways open to public travel.

54 02 This purpose is achieved through the following objectives:

- 55 A. Promote safety, inclusion, and mobility for all users of the road network;
- 56 B. Promote efficiency through creating national uniformity in the meaning and appearance of  
57 traffic control devices;
- 58 C. Promote national consistency in the use, installation, and operation of traffic control devices;  
59 and
- 60 D. Provide basic principles for traffic engineers to use in making decisions regarding the use,  
61 installation, operation, maintenance, and removal of traffic control devices.

62 03 The scope of the MUTCD is limited to the meaning, design, application, installation, and operation  
63 of traffic control devices. The MUTCD is not a road design manual nor is it a comprehensive safety  
64 manual. It is not a policy or directive on the design or character of communities or the geometric design  
65 of roads. The MUTCD also is not intended to prioritize any particular travel mode or to influence land  
66 use or access by any mode of travel. Such policies are determined by the responsible State and local  
67 authorities and roadway owners.

68 04 The MUTCD governs how traffic control devices communicate directly with road users about how  
69 the road network is intended to be navigated safely and efficiently, within the context and constraints of  
70 the highway or street's physical space, design features, and surrounding environment.

71 ~~0305~~ Uniformity of the meaning of traffic control devices is vital to their effectiveness. Uniformity  
72 means treating similar situations in a similar way. Uniformity of devices simplifies the task of the road  
73 user because it aids in recognition and understanding, thereby reducing perception/reaction time.  
74 Uniformity assists road users, law enforcement officers, and traffic courts by giving everyone the same  
75 interpretation. Uniformity assists public highway officials through efficiency in manufacture, installation,  
76 maintenance, and administration.

77 ~~0406~~ The use of uniform traffic control devices also requires uniform and appropriate application.

78 ~~0507~~ The applicability of the MUTCD to facilities open to public travel is independent of the type of  
79 ownership or jurisdiction (public or private) and the source of funding (Federal, State, local, or private).

80 ~~0608~~ This Manual presumes the user of the MUTCD has sufficient working knowledge, professional  
81 training and experience, and education in the principles of traffic engineering. Other resources can be  
82 consulted to understand the basis for decisions that are made in which engineering study or judgment will  
83 be applied.