



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

Wade Horton, Director

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September 19, 2013

**PROCEDURAL MEMORANDUM T-2**

**TO:** Public Works Staff (To which staff this applies)

**FROM:** Jeremy Ghent, Operations and Planning Manager

**VIA:** Glenn D. Marshall, Transportation Division Manager

**SUBJECT: Traffic Control Devices, Warrants, Maintenance and Installation of Signs**

**1. OBJECTIVE**

To establish as procedure for the installation of Traffic Control Devices

**2. AUTHORITY**

*California Vehicle Code §21100*; grants local authorities the ability to regulate traffic by means of traffic control devices.

*California Vehicle Code §21400*; grants CalTrans the authority to adopt rules and regulations for the use of traffic control devices allowed under *§21100*. Cal Trans implements this section by publishing the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CaMUTCD).

*County Traffic Regulations Code §15.01 Traffic Regulations – Generally*; establishes the Traffic Regulations Code (TRC) and a process that it can be modified by resolutions by the Board of Supervisors. This section also makes the modification and maintenance of the (TRC) the responsibility of the Director of Public Works.

*County Traffic Regulations Code §15.20 Traffic Control Devices*; establishes that traffic control devices shall be placed by the County Roads Commissioner.

### 3. PROCEDURE

#### a. Traffic Signs

Sign installations: Traffic sign layout shall follow the FHWA Standard Highway Signs and the California Sign Specifications.

Sign Materials: All signs shall be made of high intensity diamond grade reflectorized sheeting.

#### b. Sign Installation

All signs shall be installed by the Traffic Crew as directed by the Transportation Division Manager except in the following circumstances:

- Temporary traffic control signage placed by a contractor as part of a County contract.
- Temporary traffic control signage placed as a condition of an encroachment permit/road closure permit.
- Roadway signage for road improvement projects where specified on plans approved by the Department.

#### c. Sign Replacement/Maintenance

Road signs shall be repaired or replaced upon notification of being missing, damaged, or obscured within the response time noted below. Road maintenance sections shall be responsible for completing temporary actions for downed signs by the conclusion of the business day.

<u>Sign Type</u>	<u>Response Time</u>
• "STOP" Signs	Within 24 Hours
• Warning Signs	Within 3 Business Days
• All other Signs	Within 3 Weeks

Road sections shall maintain the following minimum inventory of signs in each road yard:

- 2 – R2-2 "STOP" Signs
- 2 – W3-1 "Stop Ahead" Signs
- 8 – R11-2 "Road Closed" Signs
- 4 – W8-7 "Loose Gravel" Signs

In accordance with the CaMUTCD, sign retro-reflectivity should be monitored by visual nighttime inspection on a 5-year cycle, beginning in February 2012. Approximately 20% of the regulatory, warning, and guidance signs on a County maintained road shall be visually inspected each year using the following criteria:

- Use a pickup truck or SUV to conduct the inspection.

- Conduct the inspections at normal speed from the travel lane.
- Conduct the inspections using low-beam headlights while minimizing interior vehicle lighting.
- Evaluate signs at typical viewing distances so that adequate time is available for an appropriate driving response.
- Use an inspector who is at least 60 years old.

This log is placed in the road file.

Other methods that comply with the CaMUTCD may be substituted for the above procedure if first determined necessary by the Transportation Division Manager. Inspection coverage and results should be documented in the County's Enterprise Financial System (SAP).

An equal number of Class II barricades shall be available at each road yard for temporary sign placement.

#### **d. Speed Limits**

Speed limits are governed by the California Vehicle Code (CVC) and the CaMUTCD Section 2B.13.

In general, speed limits must be based on an Engineering and Traffic Survey (E&TS). The criteria for this analysis is found in the CaMUTCD 2B.13. The E&TS form is attached.

The CVC provides certain maximum speed limits for roadways that meet various definitions. These include:

- Maximum Speed Law establishes a speed limit of 55 mph on any 2 lane undivided highway that is not otherwise posted.
- Prima Facie Speed limit – 15 mph for un-gated railroad crossings
- Prima Facie Speed limit – 15 mph for any alleyway
- Prima Facie Speed limit – 25 mph for a residential district
- Prima Facie Speed limit – 25 mph for any marked business district
- Prima Facie Speed limit – 25 mph for any marked school or senior center

All of the above have specific requirements that must be met in order for these definitions to apply can be found in the CaMUTCD and the CVC.

#### **e. Advisory Speed Signs**

Advisory speeds are used in conjunction with warning signs to alert drivers of the recommended traveling speed for roadway features. Advisory speed signage is placed

at the discretion of the Transportation Division Manager and in accordance with the CaMUTCD.

In the case of roadways which have a series of curves, the general practice is for the first curve in either direction to be posted with a curve sign and advisory speed (if applicable) and a windy road ahead sign is placed prior to the next curve indicating the length of the windy section.

#### **f. Street Name Signs**

- Street name signs should be installed on two corners, diagonal from each other, at each intersection. Preference should be given on the approach side of the major road.
- Street name signs should be reviewed and evaluated for upgrade or replacement on County maintained roads as a part of a pavement overlay or seal coat projects.
- Street name signs may be installed on State Highways in those instances for which the intersecting road is County maintained and has an approved name. The sign blade for the highway will designate the appropriate street name for that section of road as well as the State Highway route number in a shield outline. If no street name has yet been approved, use "STATE HWY" followed by the appropriate route number. Change the State Highway route designation to the name version when normal maintenance standards warrant its replacement.
- Street name signs are placed in accordance with the Public Improvement Standards drawing M-4 Standard Street Sign and the CaMUTCD. Drawing M-4 indicates the sign location, size, and color.
- Street name signs are replaced as the Department receives feedback from the various stakeholders about the condition of signs. This feedback may come through the citizen request system, community meetings, or staff observation while completing other tasks.
- Street name signs at signalized intersections should be placed on each mast arm. These signs should be Type H: Intensity Sheeting.

#### **g. Sign Visibility**

The department trims vegetation that is blocking signs as these issues are reported or observed by staff.

#### **h. Road Construction Signs**

- Roadwork performed by County road crews: The section supervisor or designated lead worker shall ensure appropriate road construction signage is placed in conformance with Department procedures.

- Roadwork performed under County contract: County road construction contracts shall specify that the contractor ensure that appropriate road construction signage is placed in conformance with this procedure and the CaMUTCD. Contract compliance shall be enforced by the Resident Engineer.
- Roadwork performed as a part of a private development project: The project owner, either through the Engineer of Work or by a licensed contractor, shall ensure that the appropriate road construction signage is placed in conformance with this procedure and the CaMUTCD.

#### **i. Livestock Crossing Signs**

Livestock Crossing Signs: Livestock crossing signs (W11-4 Cow or Sheep) shall be placed in areas where appropriate to warn of the possibility of livestock on the road.

- Place W11-4 and supplemental sign ("Next ... Miles") signs at the beginning of the livestock crossing area.
- Place W11-4 signs in each travel direction at intersecting roads.
- Place W11-4 signs in each travel direction at cattle guards.
- Existing "Open Range" signs may remain in place until replacement is needed. These shall be replaced with current W11-4 signs as appropriate.

#### **j. Driver Feedback Signs**

Driver Feedback Signs provide for motorists to be reminded of their travel speeds on County roads. While these units have become a cost effective educational tool to promote safe driving on the road system, they are still a significant investment in capital cost and long-term maintenance. Therefore, installation of such signs shall be limited to the following road criteria:

- The road must be an arterial or collector designation.
- The road must have a traffic volume over 5000 vehicles per day.
- The road must have a legally established speed limit and be posted for 50 mph or less.
- The shoulder must be suitable to place the sign at least ten feet off the travel way in rural areas or three feet behind a curb in urban areas.
- The road may not have more than two in each direction over its entire length.

Areas not meeting the criteria above can be served by the mobile radar trailer unit as workload permits.

#### **k. Special Signs**

Special Signs: Special signs are signs within the right-of-way that are intended to provide directional guidance to the roadway user and which are not covered elsewhere in this procedural memo.

- All special signs shall be approved by the Transportation Division Manager before installation. It is intended that special signs will be placed in accordance with the CaMUTCD.
- Special signs shall be only for displaying traffic guidance information and shall not be used for promoting a particular business.
- Road signs that are confusing or misleading to the public shall be removed.
- Signs placed at the request of the Department shall be installed and maintained by the Road Crews.
- Signs placed at the request from outside the Department require an encroachment permit completed by the applicant. These signs shall be either installed and maintained by the Road Crews or inspected by the Department staff. All costs associated with the installation, maintenance, and inspection by the Department shall be reimbursed by the encroachment permit holder. Examples of these signs include "CAMPING," "WINERY," and special event signs. See Policy #P-1 for additional information.
- Existing special signs installed without an encroachment permit may remain in place until maintenance or replacement is required. When maintenance or replacement is needed, the sign shall be removed until a new encroachment permit is approved.

#### **I. Alleyways**

The *California Vehicle Code §21804* states that all traffic entering a highway from an alleyway has to yield the right-of-way. In most cases, this is sufficient to address any potential conflicts at the intersections of alleyways.

In cases that this is not sufficient, the Transportation Division Manager or their designee will conduct a review and make a determination on whether any additional traffic controls are necessary.

#### **m. Yield Signs**

The *CaMUTCD section 2B.09* indicates acceptable uses of yield signs in the State of California. All yield signs in the County right-of-way shall comply with these provisions.

#### **n. Railroad Markings**

Part 8 of the CaMUTCD establishes criteria for railroad markings. All railroad crossings involving the County right-of-way shall adhere to these provisions.

All of the crossings involving the County right-of-way are gated crossings.

#### **o. Parking Signs**

No parking zones are added to the Traffic Regulation Code by ordinance. The fire chief has the authority to establish a fire lane outside of this process.

#### **4. CHECKLISTS/HANDOUTS**

*(This section intentionally left blank.)*

#### **5. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Transportation Division Manager has the responsibility to assure that this policy is implemented by Traffic Division Staff.

#### **6. PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

*(This section intentionally left blank.)*

#### **7. DEFINITIONS**

See the San Luis Obispo County Department of Public Works Public Improvement Standards for applicable definitions.

#### **8. REFERENCES/RESOURCES**

- California Manual of Traffic Control Devices - <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/signtech/mutcdsupp/pdf/camutcd2012/CAMUTCD2012Hotlinkversion.pdf>
- California Vehicle Code - <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/signtech/mutcdsupp/pdf/camutcd2012/2012CaliforniaVehicleCode.pdf>
- County of San Luis Obispo Official Traffic Regulations Code - <http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Assets/PW/Traffic/Traffic+Codes.pdf>
- Standard Highway Signs – [http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/ser\\_shs\\_millennium\\_eng.htm](http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/ser_shs_millennium_eng.htm)

Attachments: Handouts, Checklists