

PART 1

GENERAL

CHAPTER 1A. GENERAL

Section 1A.01 Purpose of the MUTCD

Support:

01 The purpose of the MUTCD is to establish uniform national criteria for the use of traffic control devices that meet the needs and expectancy of road users on all streets, highways, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and site roadways open to public travel. Refer to Section 1B.01 and 1C.02 (phrase "Site Roadways Open to Public Travel") for applicability of CA MUTCD on various types of public and private roadway facilities.

02 This purpose is achieved through the following objectives:

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

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

04 The use of uniform traffic control devices also requires uniform and appropriate application.

05 The applicability of the MUTCD to facilities open to public travel is independent of ~~the type of ownership or jurisdiction (public or private)~~ and the source of funding (Federal, State, local, or private). Refer to Section 1B.01 and 1C.02 (phrase "Site Roadways Open to Public Travel") for applicability of CA MUTCD on various types of public and private roadway facilities.

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

07 This California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (California MUTCD) is published by the State of California, Caltrans and is issued to adopt uniform standards and specifications for all official traffic control devices in California, in accordance with Section (§) 21400 of the California Vehicle Code (CVC).

08 This California MUTCD incorporates Federal Highway Administration's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (11th Edition) published on December 19, 2023, and the previous California MUTCD 2014 Revision 9, dated April 1, 2025. It also includes other editorial, errata and format changes that were necessary to update the previous documents.

Standard:

09 **The California MUTCD is hereby adopted as and shall be the standard for all official traffic control devices, under § 21400 of CVC and § 11340.9(h) of California Government Code.**

Support:

10 California MUTCD is revised annually by end of March every year, based on California Traffic Control Devices Committee (CTCDC) quarterly meetings, agenda item proposals and discussions, leading to passing motion vote on the proposals, resulting in formal recommendations to Caltrans to incorporate and revise California MUTCD. To ensure that the traffic control device practitioner is accessing the most current information regarding traffic control device topics for California, the practitioner is advised to always reference the California MUTCD web site.

11 The California MUTCD, California Sign Specifications and other publications and related current information is available on the Internet at the following web link: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/programs/safety-programs>.

Section 1A.02 Traffic Control Devices – General Description

Support:

- 01 As defined in Section 1C.02 of this Manual, traffic control devices include all signs, signals, markings, channelizing devices, or other devices that use colors, shapes, symbols, words, sounds, and/or tactile information for the primary purpose of communicating a regulatory, warning, or guidance message to road users on a street, highway, pedestrian facility, bikeway, pathway, or site roadway open to public travel.
- 02 Infrastructure elements that restrict the road user's travel paths or vehicle speeds, such as islands, curbs, speed humps, and other raised roadway surfaces, are not traffic control devices. Transverse or longitudinal rumble strips are also not traffic control devices. Operational devices associated with the application of traffic control strategies such as fencing, roadway lighting, barriers, and attenuators are shown in this Manual for context, but their design, application, and usage are not specified since they are not traffic control devices.
- 03 Certain types of signs and other devices that do not have any traffic control purpose are sometimes placed within the highway right-of-way by or with the permission of the public agency or the official having jurisdiction over the street or highway. These signs and other devices are not considered to be traffic control devices and provisions regarding their design and use are not included in this Manual. Among these signs and other devices are the following:
- A. Devices whose purpose is to assist highway maintenance personnel, such as markers to guide snowplow operators, devices that identify culvert and drop inlet locations, and devices that precisely identify highway locations for maintenance or mowing purposes;
 - B. Devices whose purpose is to assist fire or law enforcement personnel, such as markers that identify fire hydrant locations, signs that identify fire or water district boundaries, speed measurement pavement markings, small indicator lights to assist in enforcement of red light violations, and photo enforcement systems;
 - C. Devices whose purpose is to assist utility company personnel and highway contractors, such as markers that identify underground utility locations;
 - D. Signs posting local non-traffic ordinances; and
 - E. Signs giving civic organization meeting information.

Section 1A.03 Target Road Users

Support:

- 01 Traffic control devices can be targeted at operators of motor vehicles, including driving automation systems, and at vulnerable road users.
- 02 Targeted operators of motor vehicles include motorists, public transportation operators, truck drivers, and motorcyclists. Targeted users also include vulnerable road users, who have little to no protection from crash forces. These users are defined in Title 23, U.S.C. 148(a). They include bicyclists and pedestrians, including persons with disabilities. Pedestrians with disabilities might be blind or vision-impaired, have mobility limitations, or other impairments. Protection of vulnerable users is a priority in this Manual as directed in Section 11135 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.
- 03 Operators of motor vehicles and vulnerable road users are both likely to be present on roadways where adjacent land use suggests that trips could be served by varied modes. Application of traffic control devices on these roadways requires careful consideration of measures to set and design for appropriate speeds; separation of various users in time and space; improvement of connectivity and access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders, including for people with disabilities; and implementation of safety countermeasures.

Section 1A.04 Use of the MUTCD

Support:

- 01 Traffic control device principles in the MUTCD are developed for and used by individuals who are duly authorized and qualified to conduct traffic control device activities.

Standard:

- 02 **Where the content of this Manual requires a decision for implementation, such decisions shall be made by an engineer, or an individual under the supervision of an engineer, who has the appropriate levels of experience and expertise to make the traffic control device decision. Those decisions shall be made using engineering judgment or engineering study, as required by the MUTCD provision.**

Support:

03 Section 1C.02 contains definitions of “engineering study” and “engineering judgment.”

Guidance:

04 *In making traffic control device decisions, individuals should consider the impacts of the decision on the following: safety and operational efficiency (mobility) of all road users at that location, the effective use of agency resources, cost-effectiveness, and enforcement and education aspects of traffic control devices.*

Support:

05 Throughout this Manual the headings Standard, Guidance, Option, and Support, the meanings of which are defined in Section 1C.01, are used to classify the nature of the text that follows. Figures and tables, including the notes contained therein, supplement the text, and might constitute a Standard, Guidance, Option, or Support. The user needs to refer to the appropriate text to classify the nature of the figure, table, or note contained therein.

Guidance:

06 *Except when a specific numeral is required or recommended by the text of a Section of this Manual, numerals displayed on the images of devices in the figures that specify quantities such as times, distances, speed limits, and weights should be regarded as examples only. When installing any of these devices, the numerals should be appropriately altered to fit the specific situation.*

07 *Similarly, destination names, route numbers, and State route shields that are displayed on the images of devices in the figures should be regarded as examples only. When installing any of these devices, the destination names, route numbers, and State route shields should be appropriately altered to fit the specific situation.*

Support:

08 The information contained in Paragraphs 9 and 10 of this Section will be useful when reference is being made to a specific portion of text in this Manual.

09 There are nine Parts in this Manual, and each Part includes one or more Chapters. Each Chapter includes one or more Sections. Parts are identified by a single-digit numerical identification, such as “Part 2 – Signs.” Chapters are identified by the Part number and a letter, such as “Chapter 2B – Regulatory Signs.” Sections are identified by the Chapter number and letter followed by a decimal point and a 2-digit number, such as “Section 2B.03 – Size of Regulatory Signs.” In some Chapters, the Sections are grouped together by subject into unnumbered sub-chapters with a heading, such as “Signing for Right-of-Way at Intersections” (for Sections 2B.06 through 2B.20).

10 Each Section includes one or more paragraphs. The paragraphs are indented and are identified by a number. Paragraphs are counted from the beginning of each Section without regard to the intervening text headings (Standard, Guidance, Option, or Support) or any intervening text in embedded Figures or Tables. Some paragraphs have lettered or numbered items. As an example of how to cite this Manual, the phrase “[n]ot less than 40 feet beyond the stop line” that appears in Section 4D.08 of this Manual would be referenced in writing as “Section 4D.08, Par.1, A.1,” and would be verbally referenced as “Item A.1 of Paragraph 1 of Section 4D.08.”

11 The California MUTCD uses a format similar to the National MUTCD, as follows:

- A. It incorporates National MUTCD in its entirety and explicitly shows which portions thereof are applicable or not applicable in California.
- B. The unedited National MUTCD text is shown in “Times New Roman” font with black color.
- C. Text portions of the National MUTCD content that are not applicable in California are shown with a strikethrough of the black National MUTCD text and blue vertical bars on the right margin to keep them distinct from the National MUTCD unedited black text.
- D. California text additions, including new paragraphs, and enhancements are incorporated into the combined document at appropriate locations and shown in an “Arial Narrow” font with blue color and blue vertical bars on the right margin to keep them distinct from the National MUTCD content.
- E. All National MUTCD figures and tables, or portions thereof, which are not applicable in California, are shown with appropriate size blue X cross-outs.
- F. California text additions to National MUTCD figures are shown in an “Arial” font with blue color to keep them distinct from the National MUTCD content.
- G. California symbols, diagrams, dimensions, text marking additions to National MUTCD figures are shown in blue color to keep them distinct from the National MUTCD content.

- H. National MUTCD figures and tables that have been modified or added to, in the California MUTCD retain the same MUTCD Figure or Table number but include "(CA)" to indicate that it is the California version of the MUTCD Figure or Table. For example:
 - 1. Figure 2C-5(CA). Vertical Grade Signs and Plaques
 - 2. Table 8B-1(CA) California Grade Crossing Sign and Plaque Minimum Sizes
 - I. California added figure's title text is shown in "Arial" font with blue color. California added table's title text is show in "Arial Narrow" font with blue color.
 - J. All CA MUTCD modifications to the NMUTCD are denoted by blue vertical bars on the right margin as demonstrated on the right.
 - K. For the applicability of the figures and tables, practitioners are expected to refer to the corresponding figure and table number reference in the section text contents of the CA MUTCD to determine if it is a Standard, Guidance, Option or Support statement and other details.
 - L. For California topics where there is no corresponding section, figure or table in the National MUTCD, the California MUTCD gives a number that begins with the number 101 for that section, figure or table and increases in sequence, followed with a "(CA)" to indicate that this is a California created section, figure or table number. For example:
 - 1. Section 3B.101(CA) Turnouts
 - 2. Figure 7B-101(CA). Example of School Area Signs with Flashing Yellow Beacons
 - 3. Table 1B-101(CA). Status of Interim Approvals Issued By FHWA in California
- 12 Refer to Figure 1A-101(CA) for further details and information regarding California MUTCD format.
- 13 List of Known Errors in Federal Highway Administration's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (11th Edition) published on December 19, 2023, are available at the Federal Highway Administration's MUTCD Web site at <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov>. The FHWA intends to correct these errors via a future rulemaking action. This list of known errors is provided solely for the information of MUTCD users and does not constitute official changes to the National MUTCD at this time.
- 14 California MUTCD includes references to Federal Highway Administration's List of Known Errors throughout this Manual, where appropriate. Since these known errors do not constitute official changes to the National MUTCD, only a reference to the List of Known Errors is included in this Manual and no changes have been made in this Manual to address these Known Errors.
- 15 Federal Highway Administration's MUTCD Team receives questions about a wide variety of issues involving traffic control devices and the MUTCD. These frequently asked questions (FAQs) are compiled and updated, and are available at the Federal Highway Administration's MUTCD Web site at <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov>.

Section 1A.05 Relation to Other Publications

Standard:

- 01 **To the extent that they are incorporated by specific reference, the latest editions of the following publications shall be a part of this Manual: "Standard Highway Signs" publication (FHWA), and "Color Specifications for Retroreflective Sign and Pavement Marking Materials" (appendix to Subpart F of Part 655 of Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations).**

Support:

- 02 The "Standard Highway Signs" publication includes standard alphabets and symbols and arrows for signs and pavement markings.
- 03 The MUTCD is not a roadway design manual, and engineers seeking guidance on design should refer to appropriate roadway design guides recognized by the Federal Highway Administration as needed for the design application.
- 04 Other publications are referenced in this Manual as useful resources, but they are not regulatory in nature and are not independently legally enforceable.
- 05 Latest version of other publications are referenced in this Manual as useful resources of information with respect to the use of this Manual. For publication references that appear only once in this manual, as they are specific to a single section, these references are located within those sections throughout the chapters and parts of the manual. Any publication references that appear multiple times and referenced in multiple sections of this manual, are listed below:
- A. "California Building Standards Code" (California Building Standards Commission)
 - B. "California Business and Professions Code" (State of California)
 - C. "California Code of Regulations (CCR)" (State of California)
 - D. "California Health and Safety Code" (State of California)

- E. "California Manual for Setting Speed Limits" (Caltrans)
 - F. "California Streets and Highways Code (SHC)" (State of California)
 - G. "California Vehicle Code (CVC)" (Department of Motor Vehicles)
 - H. "Highway Design Manual" (Caltrans)
 - I. "High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Guidelines for Planning, Design, and Operations" (Caltrans)
 - J. "Maintenance Manual" (Caltrans)
 - K. "Ramp Metering Design Manual" (Caltrans)
 - L. "Standard Plans" (Caltrans)
 - M. "Standard Specifications" (Caltrans)
 - N. "Standard Special Provisions" (Caltrans)
 - O. "Traffic Manual" (Caltrans)
 - P. "Traffic Safety Systems Manual" (Caltrans)
- 06 Following information can be used to access some of these publications referenced:
- A. State of California Code Publications & California Law <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes.xhtml>
 - B. Caltrans Manuals <https://dot.ca.gov/manuals>

Section 1A.06 Uniform Vehicle Code – Rules of the Road

Support:

- 01 The "Uniform Vehicle Code" (UVC) is one of the publications referenced in the MUTCD. The UVC contains a model set of motor vehicle codes and traffic laws for use throughout the United States, the intent of which is to promote national uniformity in these laws. The Rules of the Road contained in the UVC are intended to be recommendations for States to adopt in their State statutes and are not independently legally enforceable.

Guidance:

- 02 *The actions required of road users to obey regulatory devices should be specified by State statute, or in cases not covered by State statute, in local ordinances or resolutions. Such statutes, ordinances, and resolutions should be consistent with the "Uniform Vehicle Code-" and "California Vehicle Code" (CVC).*

Figure 1A-101(CA). California MUTCD Format Explanations (Sheet 1 of 7)

The diagram shows a page from the California MUTCD with various annotations. At the top left, a box contains the text "California MUTCD 2026 Edition (FHWA's MUTCD 2023 Edition, as amended for use in California)". At the top right, a box contains "Page 54". The main title is "PART 1 GENERAL" followed by "CHAPTER 1A. GENERAL". The section is "Section 1A.01 Purpose of the MUTCD". The text is numbered 01 through 11. A blue vertical bar is on the right margin. A red box highlights a strikethrough in the text: "the type of ownership or jurisdiction (public or private)". A red box at the bottom left contains "Chapter 1A - General Part 1 General". A red box at the bottom right contains "January 18, 2026".

Manual title and exact version of FHWA's MUTCD that it incorporates

Page number

Blue vertical bar on right margin indicating CA MUTCD addition, modification or deletion (via strikethrough of MUTCD text)

Unedited MUTCD text shown in "Times New Roman" black color font

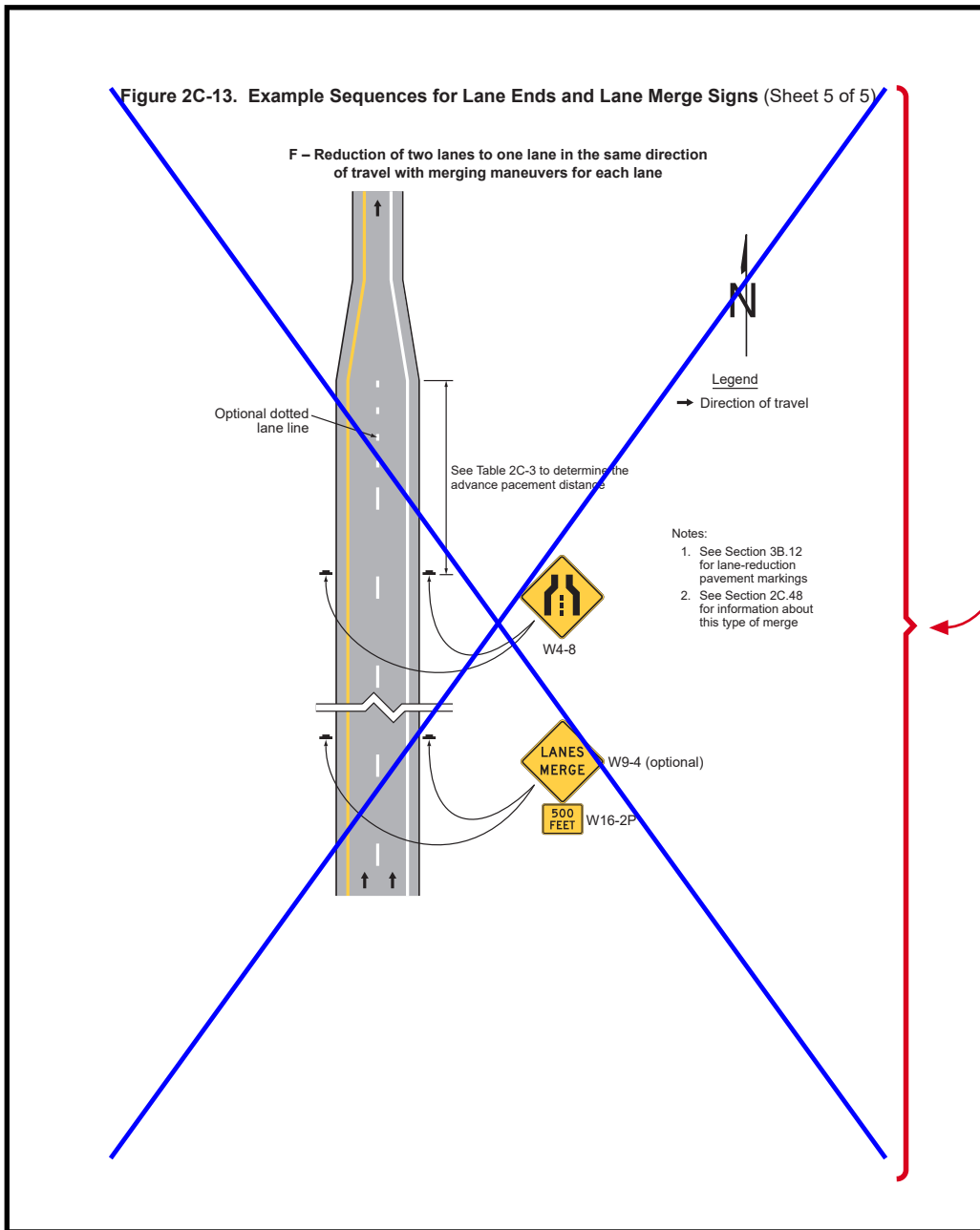
Example of MUTCD text strikethrough

CA MUTCD text shown in "Arial Narrow" blue color font along with blue vertical bar on right margin

CA MUTCD chapter number and name along with the part number and name

Date of issuance and adoption of the CA MUTCD

Figure 1A-101(CA). California MUTCD Format Explanations (Sheet 2 of 7)



Entire national MUTCD figure not applicable in California is shown with a blue X cross-out

Figure 1A-101(CA). California MUTCD Format Explanations (Sheet 3 of 7)

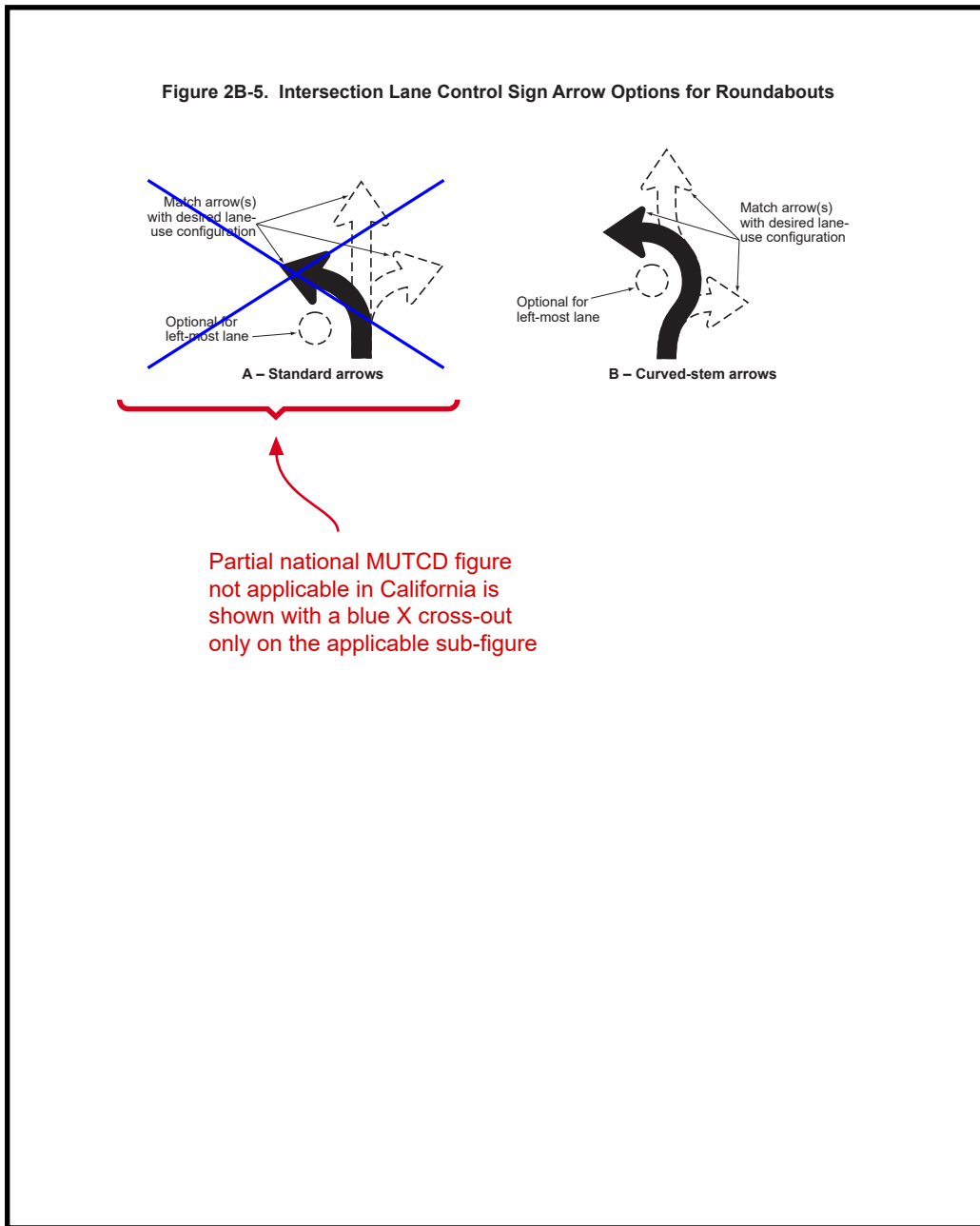
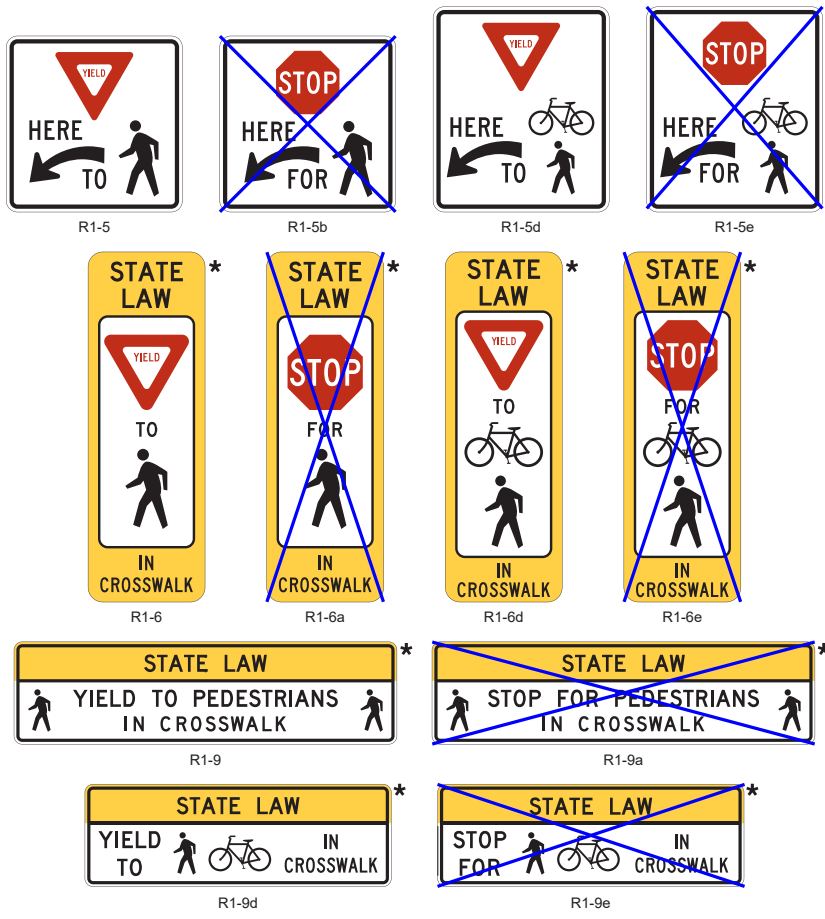


Figure 1A-101(CA). California MUTCD Format Explanations (Sheet 4 of 7)

Figure 2B-2. Unsignalized Pedestrian Crosswalk Signs

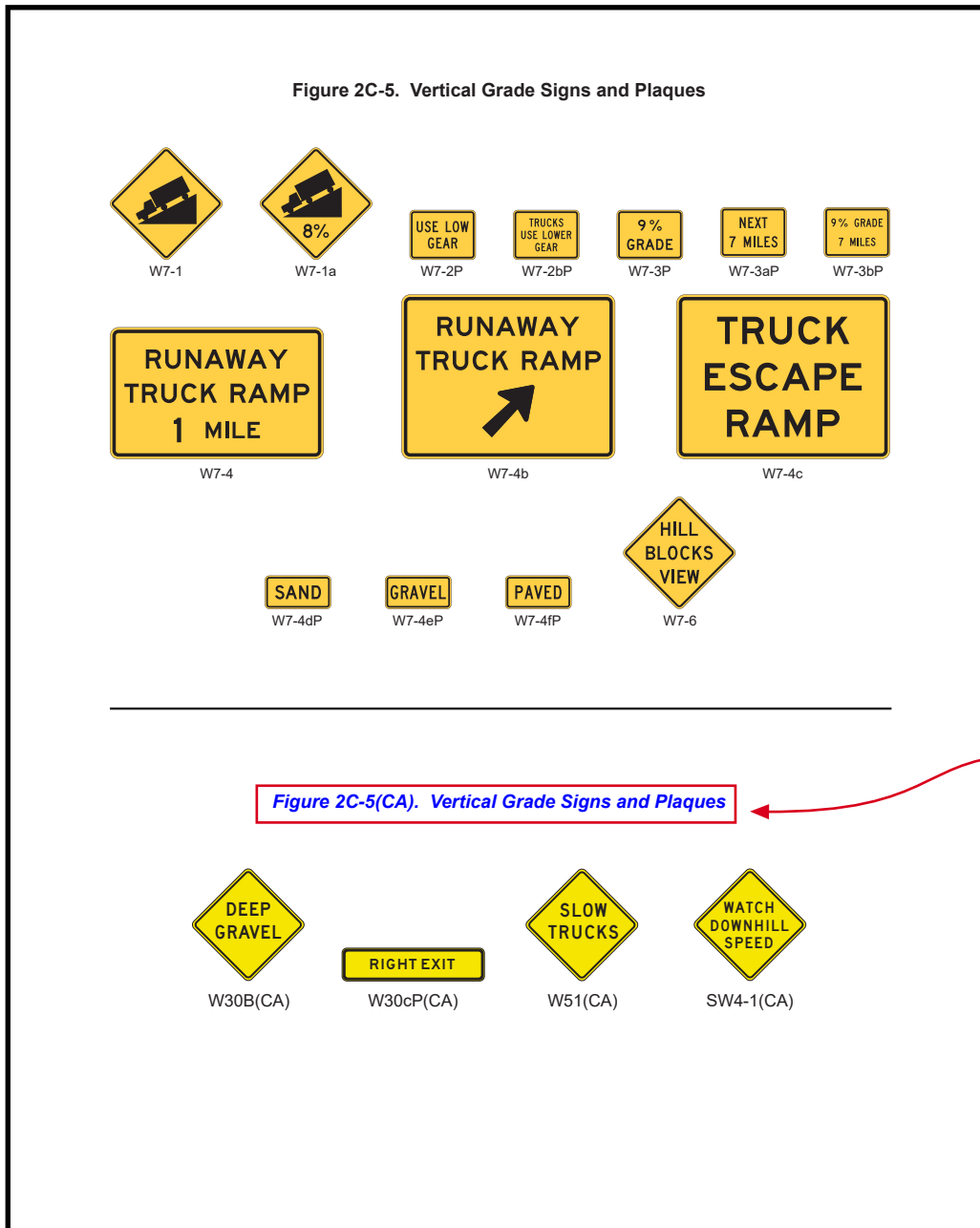


National MUTCD signs, markings, devices, symbols or diagrams not applicable in California are shown with a blue X cross-out only on the applicable signs, markings, devices, symbols or diagrams within the national MUTCD figure

* The legend STATE LAW is optional. A fluorescent yellow-green background color may be used instead of yellow for this sign.

Signs are not shown in proportion to their designated sizes.







Figure 1A-101(CA). California MUTCD Format Explanations (Sheet 5 of 7)



California MUTCD figures which complement national MUTCD figures retain the federal figure number while adding "(CA)" at the end of the number. In such cases, more often than not, the CA MUTCD figure title also matches the national MUTCD figure title.

Figure 1A-101(CA). California MUTCD Format Explanations (Sheet 6 of 7)

Figure 2D-101(CA). California Miscellaneous Guide Signs

 G30(CA)	 G30aP(CA)	 G30bP(CA)
 G68(CA)	 G98A(CA)	 SG1(CA)

California MUTCD figures with no corresponding national MUTCD figures begin with the number "101" and add "(CA)" while increasing in sequence from that number. The same goes for chapter section texts and tables.

Figure 1A-101(CA). California MUTCD Format Explanations (Sheet 7 of 7)

Table 2B-1. Regulatory Sign and Plaque Sizes (Sheet 1 of 6)

Sign or Plaque	Sign Designation	Section	Conventional Road		Expressway	Freeway	Minimum	Oversized
			Single Lane	Multi-Lane				
Stop	R1-1	2B.04	30 x 30	36 x 36	36 x 36	—	30 x 30*	48 x 48
Yield	R1-2	2B.05	36 x 36 x 36	48 x 48 x 48	48 x 48 x 48	60 x 60 x 60	30 x 30 x 30*	—
To Oncoming Traffic (plaque)	R1-2aP	2B.18	24 x 18	24 x 18	36 x 30	48 x 36	24 x 18	—
To Traffic in Circle (plaque)	R1-2bP	2B.18	24 x 15	24 x 15	—	—	24 x 15	36 x 24
To All Lanes (plaque)	R1-2cP	2B.18	24 x 15	24 x 15	—	—	24 x 15	36 x 24
All Way (plaque)	R1-3P	2B.04	18 x 6	18 x 6	—	—	—	30 x 12
Yield Here to Pedestrians	R1-5	2B.19	—	36 x 36	—	—	—	36 x 36
Stop Here for Pedestrians	R1-5b	2B.19	—	36 x 36	—	—	—	36 x 36
Yield Here to (Stop Here for) Trail Crossing	R1-5d, 5e	2B.19	—	36 x 42	—	—	—	—
In-Street Pedestrian Crossing - Yield (Stop)	R1-6, 6a	2B.20	12 x 36	12 x 36	—	—	—	—
In-Street Trail Crossing - Yield (Stop)	R1-6d, 6e	2B.20	12 x 36	12 x 36	—	—	—	—
Overhead Pedestrian Crossing - Yield (Stop)	R1-9, 9a	2B.20	90 x 24	90 x 24	—	—	—	—
Overhead Trail Crossing	R1-9d, 9e	2B.20	72 x 24	72 x 24	—	—	—	—
Except Right Turn (plaque)	R1-10P	2B.04	24 x 18	24 x 18	—	—	—	—
Speed Limit	R2-1	2B.21	24 x 30	30 x 36	36 x 48	48 x 60	18 x 24	30 x 36
Truck Speed Limit (plaque)	R2-2P	2B.22	24 x 24	24 x 24	36 x 36	48 x 48	—	36 x 36
Bus Speed Limit (plaque)	R2-2aP	2B.22	24 x 24	24 x 24	36 x 36	48 x 48	—	36 x 36
Truck-Bus Speed Limit (plaque)	R2-2bP	2B.22	24 x 30	24 x 30	36 x 42	48 x 54	—	36 x 42
Vehicles Over X Tons Speed Limit (plaque)	R2-2cP	2B.22	24 x 30	24 x 30	36 x 42	48 x 54	—	36 x 42
Night Speed Limit (plaque)	R2-3P	2B.23	24 x 24	24 x 24	36 x 36	48 x 48	—	36 x 36
Minimum Speed Limit (plaque)	R2-4P	2B.24	24 x 24	24 x 24	36 x 36	48 x 48	—	36 x 36
Combined Maximum and Minimum Speed Limits	R2-4a	2B.24	24 x 48	24 x 48	36 x 72	48 x 96	—	36 x 72
Unless Otherwise Posted (plaque)	R2-5P	2B.21	24 x 18	24 x 18	36 x 24	36 x 24	—	36 x 24
Citywide (plaque)	R2-5aP	2B.21	24 x 6	24 x 6	—	—	—	30 x 9
Neighborhood (plaque)	R2-5bP	2B.21	24 x 6	24 x 6	—	—	—	30 x 9
Residential (plaque)	R2-5cP	2B.21	24 x 6	24 x 6	—	—	—	30 x 9
Fines Higher (plaque)	R2-6P	2B.25	24 x 18	24 x 18	36 x 24	48 x 36	—	36 x 24
Fines Double (plaque)	R2-6aP	2B.25	24 x 18	24 x 18	36 x 24	48 x 36	—	36 x 24
\$XX Fine (plaque)	R2-6bP	2B.25	24 x 18	24 x 18	36 x 24	48 x 36	—	36 x 24
Double Higher Fines Zone	R2-10	2B.25	24 x 30	24 x 30	36 x 48	48 x 60	—	36 x 48
End Higher Fines Zone	R2-11	2B.25	24 x 30	24 x 30	36 x 48	48 x 60	—	36 x 48
End Variable Speed Limit	R2-13	2B.21	24 x 30	24 x 30	36 x 48	48 x 60	—	36 x 48
End Truck Speed Limit	R2-14	2B.21	24 x 30	24 x 30	36 x 48	48 x 60	—	36 x 48
Movement Prohibition	R3-1.2, 3, 4, 18, 27	2B.26	24 x 24	36 x 36	36 x 36	—	—	48 x 48
Movement Prohibition - Trucks	R3-1b	2B.26	24 x 36	24 x 36	36 x 54	36 x 54	—	—
Movement Prohibition - Trucks Buses	R3-1c	2B.26	24 x 42	24 x 42	36 x 60	36 x 60	—	—
Movement Prohibition - Trucks Over X Tons	R3-1d	2B.26	24 x 48	24 x 48	36 x 66	36 x 66	—	—
Movement Prohibition - Except Buses	R3-1e	2B.26	24 x 36	24 x 36	36 x 54	36 x 54	—	—
Movement Prohibition - Except Buses Taxis	R3-1f	2B.26	24 x 42	24 x 42	36 x 66	36 x 66	—	—
Movement Prohibition - Time and Day	R3-1g	2B.26	24 x 36	24 x 36	36 x 54	36 x 54	—	—

National MUTCD tables content not applicable in California have blue strikethrough, and often, replaced by blue California text above the strikethrough.