

California MUTCD 2026 (Draft)

(FHWA's National MUTCD 2023 - As Amended for use in California)



The National MUTCD 2023 is published by Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) under 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 655, Subpart F. On December 19, 2023, a Final Rule adopting the National MUTCD 2023 was published in the Federal Register with an effective date of January 18, 2024. States must adopt the National MUTCD as their legal State standard for traffic control devices within two years from the effective date.

Caltrans began the process to review National MUTCD 2023 for adoption in California by soliciting CA MUTCD practitioners statewide to form Subject Matter Expert (SME) Workgroups based on the individual Parts of the MUTCD.

This document has been prepared by Caltrans as an initial draft to revise current California MUTCD to be in substantial conformance with FHWA's National MUTCD 2023 (11th Edition). This document was developed pursuant to SME Workgroup members review of their respective MUTCD part in the weekly/bi-weekly meetings, when comparing the new National MUTCD 2023 with California revised contents of the National MUTCD 2009 (10th Edition) in the current CA MUTCD 2014 Revision 8. The SME Workgroup meeting reviews and discussions focused on assessing potential impacts of adopting these National MUTCD 2023 changes in California and provided comments and recommendations to Caltrans, which were used by Caltrans to finalize this draft document.

This draft document is now being shared with the traffic control device practitioners in California for review and open to the public to provide comments. All comments received will be discussed with the respective SME Workgroup members for resolution and response, as appropriate, and will be used to prepare the final draft. The final draft will then be prepared as an agenda item for the California Traffic Control Devices Committee (CTCDC) meeting (public hearing) and made open to public for review and comment, using CTCDC established process and in compliance with California Vehicle Code (CVC) 21400 provisions.

This document combines the National MUTCD 2023 and current California MUTCD 2014 Revision 8 (effective January 11, 2024). Though every effort has been made by Caltrans to ensure accuracy of this document, the inherent variances between National MUTCD and California MUTCD, along with moving of contents and reorganization undertaken by FHWA in the National MUTCD 2023, there may be unintentional errors or omissions in this document or some contents may have been overlooked.

The official versions of the National MUTCD 2023 and California MUTCD 2014 Revision 8 are available on the following websites:

- National MUTCD 2023 - <https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/>
- California MUTCD 2014 Revision 8 - <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/safety-programs/camutcd>

This document uses the current California MUTCD format, which is similar to the National MUTCD format. It incorporates National MUTCD in its entirety and explicitly shows which portions thereof are applicable or not applicable in California as follows:

- **Unedited black text** - The unedited National MUTCD text is shown in "Times New Roman" font and black color
- **Strikethrough black text** - Text portions of the National MUTCD content that are not applicable in California are shown with a strikethrough of the black text and a blue margin line on the right side.
- **Blue text** - The California text additions, including new paragraphs, and enhancements are incorporated into the combined document at appropriate locations and shown in "Arial Narrow" font and blue color with a blue margin line on the right side.
- **California topics with no corresponding National MUTCD section** – Sections are given a number that begins with number 101 and increases in sequence, followed with a "(CA)" to indicate that this is a California created section.

CHAPTER 7D. CROSSING SUPERVISION

Section 7D.01 Adult Crossing Guards

Option:

- 01 Adult crossing guards may be used to provide gaps in traffic at school crossings where an engineering study has shown that adequate gaps need to be created, and where authorized by law.

Support:

- 02 Adult crossing guards can also add conspicuity at the crossing where children, who are typically smaller in stature, might not be as visible.
- 03 High standards for selection of adult crossing guards are essential because they are responsible for the safety of and the efficient crossing of the street by schoolchildren within and in the immediate vicinity of school crosswalks.

Guidance:

- 04 *Jurisdictions should have policies and procedures for the qualifications, selection, and training of adult crossing guards.*

Option:

- 05 Adult Crossing Guards may be assigned at designated school crossings to assist school pedestrians at specified hours when going to or from school. The following suggested policy for their assignment applies only to crossings.

Guidance:

- 06 *An Adult Crossing Guard should be considered when:*
- A. *Special situations make it necessary to assist school pedestrians in crossing the street.*
 - B. *A change in the school crossing location is being made, but prevailing conditions require school crossing supervision until the change is constructed and it is not reasonable to install another form of traffic control or technique for this period.*

Criteria for Adult Crossing Guards

Support:

- 07 Adult Crossing Guards normally are assigned where official supervision of school pedestrians is desirable while they cross a public highway, and at least 40 school pedestrians for each of any two hours (not necessarily consecutive) daily use the crossing while going to or from school.

Option:

- 08 Adult crossing guards may be used under the following conditions:
1. At uncontrolled crossings where there is no alternate controlled crossing within 600 feet; and
 - a. In urban areas where the vehicular traffic volume exceeds 350 during each of any two hours (not necessarily consecutive) in which 40 or more school pedestrians cross daily while going to or from school; or
 - b. In rural areas where the vehicular traffic volume exceeds 300 during each of any two hours (not necessarily consecutive) in which 30 or more school pedestrians cross daily while going to or from school.
 2. Whenever the critical (85th percentile) approach speed exceeds 40 mph, the guidelines for rural areas should be applied.
 3. At stop sign-controlled crossing:
 4. Where the vehicular traffic volumes on undivided highways of four or more lanes exceeds 500 per hour during any period when the school pedestrians are going to or from school.
 5. At traffic signal-controlled crossings:
 - a. Where the number of vehicular turning movements through the school crosswalk exceeds 300 per hour while school pedestrians are going to or from school; or
 - b. Where justified through analysis of the operations of the intersection.
 6. At pedestrian hybrid beacon controlled crossing.

Legal Authority and Program Funding for Adult Crossing Guards

Option:

09 Cities and counties may designate local law enforcement agencies, the governing board of any school district or a county superintendent of schools to recruit and assign adult crossing guards to intersections that meet approved guidelines for adult supervision.

Support:

10 There are various methods for funding a school adult crossing guard program. One of these methods is through the use of fines and forfeitures received under the Penal Code. Disposition of these fines and forfeitures is defined in CVC Sections 42200 and 42201.

11 An example of these dispositions by cities and counties is as follows:

- A. Disposition by cities (CVC 42200). Fines and forfeitures received by cities and deposited into a "Traffic Safety Fund" may be used to pay the compensation of school crossing guards who are not regular full-time members of the police department of the city.
- B. Disposition by county (CVC 42201). Fines and forfeitures received by a county and deposited in the road fund of the county may be used to pay the compensation of school crossing guards, and necessary equipment and administrative costs. The board of supervisors may adopt standards for crossing guards and has final authority over the total cost of the crossing guard program.

Training Programs for Adult Crossing Guards

Support:

12 Caltrans and Active Transportation Resource Center (ATRC) provides local jurisdictions "California School Crossing Guard Training Program - Administration and Training Guidelines", to promote standardized training to newly employed Crossing Guards, as well as seasoned Crossing Guards, to help them understand their roles and responsibilities, learn about relevant laws and traffic regulations, practice proper crossing techniques, and foster safe school environments. More details on the training program and guideline are available at https://caatpresources.org/train_cot_crossguard.html.

Guidance:

13 *Adequate training should be provided in adult crossing guard responsibilities and authority. This function can usually be performed effectively by a law enforcement agency responsible for traffic control.*

14 *Training programs should be designed to acquaint newly employed or reassigned crossing guards with their specific duties, local traffic regulations, and crossing techniques. Training workshops may be used as a method of advising experienced employees of recent changes in existing traffic laws and program procedures. For example, crossing guards should be familiar with the California law which provides that any person who disregards any traffic signal or direction given by a non-student school crossing guard authorized by a law enforcement agency, any board of supervisors of a county or school district shall be guilty of an infraction and subject to the penalties of Section 42001 of the CVC (Section 2815).*

Section 7D.02 Operating Procedures for Adult Crossing Guards

Standard:

01 **Law enforcement officers performing school crossing supervision and adult crossing guards and school safety patrol shall wear high-visibility retroreflective safety apparel labeled as ANSI 107-2020 standard performance for Class 2, Type R, as described in Section 6C.05.**

02 **Adult crossing guards shall not direct traffic in the usual law enforcement regulatory sense. In the control of traffic, they shall pick opportune times to create a sufficient gap in the traffic flow. At these times, they shall stand in the roadway to indicate that pedestrians are about to use or are using the crosswalk, and that all vehicular traffic must stop.**

03 **Adult crossing guards shall use a STOP paddle. The STOP paddle shall be the primary hand- signaling device.**

04 **The STOP paddle shall comply with the provisions for a STOP/SLOW paddle (see Section 6D.02) except both sides shall be a STOP face.**

05 **The paddle shall be retroreflective or illuminated when used during hours of darkness.**

Option:

06 The 24 x 24 inch size of the STOP (C28A(CA)) paddle may be used where greater emphasis is needed and speeds are 30 mph or more.

Support:

07 See Section 6D.02 for details on STOP paddles and rigid staff.

Section 7D.101(CA) School Safety Patrols

Support:

01 The California Education Code, Sections 49300 to 49307, and the California Code of Regulations, Sections 570 to 576 and 632, authorize the development of School Safety Patrols and outline rules for implementing these programs within the state.

