

Table 2A-1. Use of Sign Shapes

Shape	Signs
Octagon*	Stop (R1-1)**
Equilateral Triangle (downward-pointing)*	Yield (R1-2)**
Circle*	Grade Crossing Advance Warning (W10-1)**
Pennant (Isosceles Triangle with longer axis horizontal, pointed right)*	No Passing Zone (W14-3)**
Pentagon (upward-pointing)*	School (S1-1) (squared bottom corners)** County Route (M1-6) (tapered lower sides)**
Crossbuck (two rectangles in a perpendicular "X" configuration)*	Grade Crossing (R15-1)**
Diamond	Warning Series
Rectangle (including square)	Regulatory Series Guide Series*** Warning Series
Trapezoid*	Recreational and Cultural Interest Area Guide Series (isosceles or right-angled) National Forest Route Sign (M1-1) (isosceles)**

* This shape shall be limited exclusively to the sign(s) indicated.

** This sign shall be exclusively the shape shown.

*** Guide series includes general service, specific service, tourist-oriented directional, general information, recreational and cultural interest area, and emergency management signs.

Note: Signs with standardized designs shall not be modified to accommodate a different shape except as provided in this Manual.

Table 2A-2. Common Uses of Sign Colors

Type of Sign	Legend								Background										
	Black	Green	Red	White	Yellow	Orange	Fluorescent Yellow-Green	Fluorescent Pink	Black	Blue	Brown	Green	Orange ¹	Red ¹	White	Yellow ¹	Purple	Fluorescent Yellow-Green	Fluorescent Pink
Regulatory	X		X	X					X					X	X				
Prohibitive			X	X ²										X ²	X				
Permissive		X													X				
Warning	X															X			
Pedestrian	X															X		X	
Bicycle	X															X		X	
Guide				X								X							
Interstate Route				X						X				X					
State Route	X														X				
U.S. Route	X														X				
County Route					X					X									
Forest Route				X							X								
Street Name				X								X							
Destination				X								X							
Reference Location				X								X							
Information				X						X		X							
Evacuation Route				X						X									
Road User Service				X						X									
Recreational				X							X	X							
Temporary Traffic Control	X												X						
Incident Management	X												X						X
School	X																	X	
ETC-Account Only	X																X ⁵		

Changeable Message Signs																			
Regulatory			X ⁴	X					X										
Warning					X				X										
Temporary Traffic Control					X	X			X										
Guide				X					X			X ³							
Motorist Services				X					X	X ³									
Incident Management					X			X	X										
School, Pedestrian, Bicycle					X		X		X										

¹ Fluorescent versions of these background colors may also be used.

² Legend and background color combination for use only as identified for specific signs in this Manual or Standard Highway Signs.

³ These alternative background colors would be provided by blue or green lighted pixels such that the entire CMS would be lighted, not just the legend.

⁴ Red is used only for the circle and diagonal or other red elements of a similar static regulatory sign.

⁵ The use of purple on signs is restricted per the provisions of Chapter 2F.

Notes:

1. The purpose of the information in this table is to provide a general overview of common color combinations. The color combinations and orientations for signs with standardized designs shall not be modified. For signs with unique legends, the shape and color shall be the same as standard signs of the same functional type.

2. The colors shown for changeable message signs are for those with electronic displays.

Table 2A-2(CA). Common Uses of Sign Colors

Type of Sign	Legend										Background												
	Black	Green	Red	White	Yellow	Brown	Cream	Orange	Fluorescent Yellow-Green	Fluorescent Pink	Black	Blue	Brown	Green	Orange	Red	White	Yellow ¹	Fluorescent Yellow-Green	Fluorescent Pink	Cream	Light blue	Purple
Playground	x																	x	x				
Interstate Business Route				x										x									
State Route				x										x									
Scenic Route				x								x											
Bicycle Route				x										x									
Historic Route							x						x										
Historical Landmark						x														x			
Milepost				x										x									
Boundary				x										x									
State Boundary	x				x																	x	
Place Name				x										x									
Structure Identification	x																x						
Memorial				x									x										
Victims Memorial				x								x											
Call Box				x								x											
Adopt-A-Highway				x								x											

¹ Fluorescent versions of these background colors may also be used.

Note: The purpose of the information in this table is to provide a general overview of common color combinations. The color combinations and orientations for signs with standardized designs shall not be modified. For signs with unique legends, the shape and color shall be the same as standard signs of the same functional type.

Table 2A-3. Illumination of Sign Elements

Means of Illumination	Sign Element to be Illuminated
Light behind the sign face	• Symbol or word message • Background • Symbol, word message, and background (through a translucent material)
Attached or independently-mounted light source designed to direct essentially uniform illumination onto the sign face	• Entire sign face
Light-emitting diodes (LEDs)	• Symbol or word message • Entire sign border
Other devices or treatments that highlight the sign shape, color, or message: Luminous tubing Fiber optics Incandescent light bulbs Luminescent panels	• Symbol or word message • Entire sign face

Table 2A-4. Retroreflection of Sign Elements

Means of Retroreflection	Sign Element
Prismatic reflector “buttons” or similar units	Symbol Word message Border
A material that has a smooth, sealed outer surface over a microstructure that reflects light	Symbol Word message Border Background

Table 2A-5. Minimum Maintained Retroreflectivity Levels¹

Sign Color	Beaded Sheeting Type (ASTM D4956)			Prismatic Sheeting	Additional Criteria
	I	II	III		
White on Green	W*; G ≥ 7	W*; G ≥ 15	W*; G ≥ 25	W ≥ 250; G ≥ 25	Overhead
	W*; G ≥ 7	W ≥ 120; G ≥ 15			Post-mounted
White on Blue	W*; B ≥ 3	W*; B ≥ 5	W*; B ≥ 12	W ≥ 250; B ≥ 12	Overhead
	W*; B ≥ 3	W ≥ 120; B ≥ 7			Post-mounted
White on Brown	W*; Br ≥ 1	W*; Br ≥ 5	W*; Br ≥ 10	W ≥ 350; Br ≥ 10	Overhead
	W*; Br ≥ 1	W ≥ 150; Br ≥ 5			Post-mounted
Black on Yellow or Black on Orange	Y*; O*	Y ≥ 50; O ≥ 50			2
	Y*; O*	Y ≥ 75; O ≥ 75			3
White on Red	W ≥ 35; R ≥ 7				4
Black on White	W ≥ 50				—
¹ The minimum maintained retroreflectivity levels shown in this table are in units of cd/lx/m ² measured at an observation angle of 0.2° and an entrance angle of -4.0°.					
² For word legend and fine symbol signs measuring at least 48 inches and for all sizes of bold symbol signs					
³ For word legend and fine symbol signs measuring less than 48 inches					
⁴ Minimum sign contrast ratio ≥ 3:1 (white retroreflectivity ÷ red retroreflectivity)					
* This sheeting type shall not be used for this color for this application					
Bold Symbol Signs					
• W1-1,2 – Turn and Curve • W1-3,4 – Reverse Turn and Curve • W1-5 – Winding Road • W1-6,7 – Large Arrow • W1-8 – Chevron • W1-10 – Intersection in Curve • W1-11 – Hairpin Curve • W1-15 – 270 Degree Loop • W2-1 – Cross Road • W2-2,3 – Side Road • W2-4,5 – T and Y Intersection • W2-6 – Circular Intersection • W2-7,8 – Double Side Roads		• W3-1 – Stop Ahead • W3-2 – Yield Ahead • W3-3 – Signal Ahead • W4-1 – Merge • W4-2 – Lane Ends • W4-3 – Added Lane • W4-5 – Entering Roadway Merge • W4-6 – Entering Roadway Added Lane • W6-1,2 – Divided Highway Begins and Ends • W6-3 – Two-Way Traffic • W10-1,2,3,4,11,12 – Grade Crossing Advance Warning		• W11-2 – Pedestrian Crossing • W11-3,4,16-22 – Large Animals • W11-5 – Farm Equipment • W11-6 – Snowmobile Crossing • W11-7 – Equestrian Crossing • W11-8 – Fire Station • W11-10 – Truck Crossing • W12-1 – Double Arrow • W16-5P,6P,7P – Pointing Arrow Plaques • W20-7 – Flagger • W21-1 – Worker	
Fine Symbol Signs (symbol signs not listed as bold symbol signs)					
Special Cases					
• W3-1 – Stop Ahead: Red retroreflectivity ≥ 7 • W3-2 – Yield Ahead: Red retroreflectivity ≥ 7; White retroreflectivity ≥ 35 • W3-3 – Signal Ahead: Red retroreflectivity ≥ 7; Green retroreflectivity ≥ 7 • W3-5 – Speed Reduction: White retroreflectivity ≥ 50 • For non-diamond shaped signs, such as W14-3 (No Passing Zone), W4-4P (Cross Traffic Does Not Stop), or W13-1P,2,3,6,7 (Speed Advisory Signs), use the largest sign dimension to determine the proper minimum retroreflectivity level.					