



California Traffic Control Devices Committee Agenda Item Report



Meeting Date: April 3, 2025 Item Number: 24-11	From: Hassan Valizadeh, Caltrans HQ Traffic Operations & Johnny Bhullar, Caltrans HQ Safety Programs
Sponsored By: Amjad Obeid, Caltrans	Presented By: Hassan Valizadeh, Caltrans HQ Traffic Operations & Johnny Bhullar, Caltrans HQ Safety Programs
Description: The draft version of the proposed CA MUTCD 2026 Part 5 document titled "Traffic Control Device Considerations for Automated Vehicles" has been finalized in response to the CTCDC recommendation and is being submitted to Federal Highway Administration's California Division for review and determination of "substantial conformance" finding with the National MUTCD 2023 (11 th Edition).	

Recommendation:

None. This item is informational and is in follow up to the CTCDC recommendation provided to Caltrans during the November 7, 2024.

Agency Making Request/Sponsor:

Hassan Valizadeh & Johnny Bhullar, Caltrans / Amjad Obeid, Caltrans

Background:

For detailed background on this item, including the proposed revisions upon which the motion shared below was based, as well as the meeting minutes of the discussions, please refer to agenda item 24-11 document and its attachments, that were included in the November 7, 2024, meeting and are available at:

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/safety-programs/ctcdc/meetings>.

This item was discussed previously in the November 7, 2024, meeting. During the meeting, CTCDC members, FHWA CA Division representative and persons in the public, shared their comments and concerns on the proposed revisions. The meeting discussions resulted in the CTCDC passing a motion, making a recommendation to Caltrans as per below:

MOTION: Mr. Bronkall moved to recommend Item 24-06, using the National language except for Paragraph 6 where the state edits will be incorporated. Mr. Scharf seconded. The Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

This motion is for the proposed text revisions included in the agenda item shared by Caltrans in the November 7, 2024, meeting.

It recommends Caltrans to:

1. **Use the National MUTCD 2023 text of Part 5**, instead of the proposed revisions, with one exception, noted per below.
2. **Use the Section 5A.04, paragraph #06 proposed revisions**, instead of the National MUTCD 2023 text of Part 5, Section 5A.04, paragraph #06.

In summary, the CTCDC motion supports only the proposal on Section 5A.04 paragraph #06 revisions, to incorporate them into CA MUTCD 2026 Part 5 draft document that is being prepared. The CTCDC motion does not support other proposed revisions included in the November 7, 2024, meeting agenda item. The meeting discussions indicated that the National MUTCD 2023 Part 5 text was adequate and should suffice, without the need to revise it, as majority of these text revisions are editorial in nature.

Caltrans reviewed the discussions and concerns shared in the CTCDC November 7, 2024, meeting, including FHWA CA Division's comments and the resulting CTCDC recommending motion to Caltrans.

Caltrans reevaluated the proposed revisions on Part 5. The review indicated that majority of the proposed revisions included in this agenda item, were made by Caltrans, while some were made by the members of the Subject Matter Experts Work Group (SME WG) established for Part 5 under the National MUTCD 2023 review and adoption efforts.

CTCDC Motion Recommendation #1 - Use the National MUTCD 2023 text of Part 5:

Caltrans purpose for providing these comments was to limit tort exposure and manage tort risk. These comments were provided in the form of a liability neutral review, to only clarify the language used. They were not intended to modify the National MUTCD or create a lower standard or negate a Guidance statement in the National MUTCD. Caltrans hasn't revised the National MUTCD text based on liability neutral review in the past versions of CA MUTCD. Part 5 topic being new, these comments were intended to minimize tort risk and exposure for the Department. Primary reason for not doing this in the past, on any part, or any previous versions of CA MUTCD, is to maintain the National MUTCD established format and meaning for the headings and usage of verbs. Using the National MUTCD text and format, standardizes the language and text included in the MUTCD.

Caltrans agrees, based on the review of the meeting discussions and shared concerns, and after reevaluating the proposed revisions, that except for two proposed revisions in Section 5A.04 para #06 Guidance Statement, all other proposed revisions are minor edits (**see example below**) to the text and don't result in any significant change to policy.

- A. ~~Clearly associating~~ **Associating** the sign location and application with the displayed message to the specific lane or road to which it applies, such as ~~with in the case of~~ parallel roads or lanes with different speed limits or restrictions.
- B. The practice of sign and information spreading (see Section 2A.20) to limit the ~~amount of~~ information displayed in one location or on one sign to ~~minimize~~ **reduce** sign clutter.
- C. Signs with designs ~~that are~~ otherwise not provided for in this Manual or the “Standard Highway Signs” publication(see Section 1A.05) are designed based on the standardized sign design practices and features as provided for in this Manual for the type of sign, the location, and the characteristics of the roadway on which it is used.
- D. The refresh rate of LEDs in the illuminated ~~portion~~ **part** of electronic-display signs to provide for greater consistency in driving automation system detection.

Caltrans sees value in retaining proposed references to other sections of the manual, that were added to improve usability of the manual. The added section references are like the section references already included in the other bullets of the same section of the National MUTCD 2023 text by FHWA. They will be useful for ease in referencing and use of the manual and promote national uniformity. The following section references **(examples shown below)** were proposed to be added for the following bullets, as the National MUTCD 2023 did not include a specific section reference for these bullets:

1. CA MUTCD 2026 Part 5, Chapter 5B, Sections 5B.02, Paragraph #02, bullet “F”
2. CA MUTCD 2026 Part 5, Chapter 5B, Sections 5B.03, Paragraph #01, bullet “A”
3. CA MUTCD 2026 Part 5, Chapter 5B, Sections 5B.03, Paragraph #01, bullet “B”
4. CA MUTCD 2026 Part 5, Chapter 5B, Sections 5B.04, Paragraph #01, bullet “E”

F. Uniform contrast markings on light-colored pavements to create greater contrast ([see Section 3A.03](#)). |

E. Temporary raised pavement markers only as a supplement to, rather than as a substitute for, pavement markings ([see Section 6J.03](#)). |

Caltrans accepts the CTCDC recommendation and will use the National MUTCD 2023 text of Part 5, instead of the proposed revisions, **with two exceptions:**

- **First exception** is to use revised text in Section 5A.04 para #06 (see details below)
- **Second exception** is to retain the proposed addition of section references.

CTCDC Motion Recommendation #2 - Use Section 5A.04, paragraph #06 proposed revisions:

Caltrans reviewed and reevaluated the proposed revisions in Section 5A.04 para #06 based on the CTCDC motion and Caltrans decision to agree to use National MUTCD 2023 Part 5 text, instead of the proposed revisions for minor edits shared above.

Caltrans review indicated that except for the two exceptions shown below, all other proposed revisions in Section 5A.04 para #06 are minor edits to the text and don't result in any significant change to policy:

1. **Section 5A.04, para #06, comment** to add text “When feasible” at the beginning of the sentence, appears to potentially negate the Guidance statement.

Guidance:

06 *When feasible, Agencies agencies should apply the following fundamental principles and considerations as they evaluate traffic control devices and other maintenance practices to support driving automation system technologies during maintenance and infrastructure improvements:*

2. **Section 5A.04, para #06, bullet “C”**, comment to delete text “Making sure” and replace it with text “Based on engineering judgment, determine” appears to potentially result in negating the Guidance statement.

C. *Based on engineering judgment, determine Making sure that temporary and/or emergency traffic control, to the extent practicable, devices are is planned in advance using devices that comply with the provisions of this Manual and that follow policies designed to provide uniformity throughout the site and across jurisdictions.*

Caltrans purpose for providing these two Section 5A.04 paragraph #06 revisions to the Guidance statements of the National MUTCD 2023 text, was intended to ensure that the engineer be allowed to exercise engineering judgment when implementing this Guidance policy.

Caltrans reviewed specifically for these two proposed comments, the format of National MUTCD 2023 for Guidance statements, its meaning, applicability, manner of use throughout the manual and ability for the engineer to make decisions.

Review indicated National MUTCD 2023 Sections 1A.03, 1C.01, 1C.02 and 1D.03, amongst other sections adequately cover this topic on the ability of, and allowing the engineer, to make decisions using engineering judgment. These references sufficiently imply the use of engineering judgment, although in specific contents of the manual the text “engineering judgment” has been used in multiple sections to emphasize it.

Caltrans has identified that two of the proposed revisions appear to **potentially negate the Guidance statement**, that could result in these two changes not being in “substantial conformance” with the National MUTCD as defined in 23 CFR 655.603(b)(1).

Caltrans acknowledges the CTCDC recommendation to use the proposed revisions in Section 5A.04 paragraph #06, supporting Caltrans proposal.

Caltrans has decided to use the National MUTCD 2023 text of Part 5, instead of the proposed revisions for entire Section 5A.04 paragraph #06 text, with one exception. In Section 5A.04 para #06, bullet “C”, the text is revised to include “based on engineering judgment”.

Caltrans staff had shared the details of the CTCDC November 7, 2024, meeting discussions with the members of the SME WG on Part 5. Caltrans plans to share the outcome of the review and decisions in response to CTCDC recommendation on this item with the SME WG members to make them aware of them.

Caltrans has prepared the finalized proposal on CA MUTCD 2026 Part 5, incorporating CTCDC recommendation and Caltrans decisions, and it is attached to this agenda item. It is being provided as an informational item to inform the CTCDC members and the public to share Caltrans decision on the CTCDC recommendation that was provided. This finalized CA MUTCD 2026 Part 5 proposal **will be submitted to FHWA CA Division for review and determination of “substantial conformance”** finding with the National MUTCD 2023 (11th Edition).

Attachments:

- [Attachment A – CA MUTCD 2026 Chapter 5A Draft \(Text\)](#)
- [Attachment B – CA MUTCD 2026 Chapter 5A Draft \(Table\)](#)
- [Attachment C – CA MUTCD 2026 Chapter 5B Draft \(Text\)](#)