



**California Traffic Control Devices Committee (CTCDC)
Agenda Item Report**



Meeting Date: May 7, 2026	From: Timothy Kong, Caltrans
Item Number: 26-03	
Sponsored By: Devang Vora, Caltrans	Presented By: Timothy Kong, Caltrans
Description: CA MUTCD 2026 Section 1B.02.P8 and 1B.02.P10: clarify the governing document and remove the ambiguity linked to the use of the term "discrepancy/discrepancies" when referring to CA MUTCD and its relationship to other documents.	

Recommendation:

Motion by committee to recommend revising CA MUTCD 2026 Section 1B.02.P8 and the second sentence of 1B.02.P10 and adding Option statements to remove ambiguity linked to the use of the term "discrepancy/discrepancies" when referring to CA MUTCD and its relationship to other Caltrans supplemental documents.

Background:

CA MUTCD 2026 Section 1B.02.P8 and 1B.02.P10 Standard paragraphs:

Paragraph 8: If there is a discrepancy between the supplemental documents and the California MUTCD, the California MUTCD shall govern.

Second sentence of Paragraph 10: If there are any discrepancies between the Sign Specifications and the California MUTCD, the California MUTCD shall govern.

The term 'discrepancy/discrepancies' is not used completely accurately in the two statements above, as discrepancy can mean any type of difference or variance. There are allowable differences between the CA MUTCD and Caltrans supplemental documents, such as Caltrans including a higher standard in their Standard Plans:

Section 1B.02.P5 states "...In some cases, the specifications and requirements for traffic control devices contained in these publications, although in compliance with the minimum standards of the California MUTCD and the National MUTCD, can be more stringent (higher standard) than those shown in the California MUTCD."

To clarify the relationship between CA MUTCD and its supplemental documents, we propose converting the sentence in Section 1B.02.P5 that says supplemental documents can have more stringent(higher) standards into Option statements that follow the existing Section 1B.02.P8 and 1B.02.P10. We also propose moving Paragraph 8 and its new Option statement to follow Paragraph 4.

Attachment:

Attachment A – Proposed changes to CA MUTCD 2026 Section 1B



ATTACHMENT A



**California Traffic Control Devices Committee (CTCDC)
Agenda Item Report**



Attachment A – Proposed changes to CA MUTCD 2026 Section 1B

Proposal:

Note:

- Black text is consistent with the Federal MUTCD.
- Blue text is current text as amended for use in California.
- ~~Struck out red~~ text is to be deleted from the CA MUTCD.
- Red text is newly proposed text.

Section 1B.02 State Adoption and Conformance

Support:

01 All States have officially adopted the National MUTCD either in its entirety, with supplemental provisions, or as a separate published document. The National MUTCD has also been adopted by the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Military Command, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Standard:

02 **States or other Federal agencies that have their own MUTCDs or Supplements shall revise these MUTCDs or Supplements to be in substantial conformance with changes to the National MUTCD within 2 years of the effective date of the Final Rule for the changes [23 CFR 655.603(b)(3)]. Substantial conformance of such State or other Federal agency MUTCDs or Supplements shall be as defined in 23 CFR 655.603(b)(1).**

Support:

02a On December 19, 2023, a Final Rule adopting the National MUTCD 2023 was published by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in the Federal Register with an effective date of January 18, 2024. California does not automatically adopt the National MUTCD immediately upon the effective date of the latest edition or revision of the National MUTCD. Caltrans revises the current CA MUTCD to adopt changes issued by FHWA to the National MUTCD, and to bring it into substantial conformance with the National MUTCD, within two years from the effective date of the final rule. Refer to Section 1A.01 for information on Caltrans' CA MUTCD annual revision cycle.

02b This California MUTCD supersedes and replaces the previously adopted (on April 1, 2025) California MUTCD 2014 Revision 9.

Standard:

03 **For the purposes of Paragraph 2 of this Section, policies, directives, specifications, standard drawings, or similar documents that are issued by an agency and that change or modify Standard, Guidance, or Option provisions in this Manual shall be considered as supplements to the MUTCD and shall also be revised to be in substantial conformance with the National MUTCD.**

04 **In accordance with 23 CFR 655.603(b)(1), in addition to a State MUTCD or Supplement, supplemental documents that a State issues, including but not limited to policies, directives, standard drawings or details, and specifications, shall not contravene or negate Standard or Guidance statements in the National MUTCD.**

05 **If there are any differences between the supplemental documents and the California MUTCD, the California MUTCD shall govern.**

Option:

06 **The specifications and requirements for traffic control devices contained in the supplemental documents may be more stringent (higher standard) than those in the California MUTCD.**

Support:

05-07 Caltrans publishes Standard Plans, Standard Specifications, Standard Special Provisions and other manuals and guidelines, which in addition to other topics, also contain specifications and requirements for traffic control devices, including their use and placement, when performing work on State highways. For the traffic control device topic portion of



the contents in these publications, these publications are considered to be supplemental documents to the California MUTCD. ~~In some cases, the specifications and requirements for traffic control devices contained in these publications, although in compliance with the minimum standards of the California MUTCD and the National MUTCD, can be more stringent (higher standard) than those shown in the California MUTCD.~~

Standard:

~~06-08~~ On State highways, the California MUTCD shall mean to include, but not limited to, supplemental documents (for the traffic control device topic portion of the contents), such as Caltrans' publications of manuals, guidelines, handbooks, pamphlets and other publications, including the following:

- A. California Manual for Setting Speed Limits,
- B. Changeable Message Sign (CMS) Guidelines
- C. Flagging Instructions Handbook
- D. Managed Lanes Guidelines
- E. Official Memos.
- F. Proven Safety Countermeasure Guidance, Manuals and related publications,
- G. Standard Plans,
- H. Standard Special Provisions,
- I. Standard Specifications,
- J. Traffic Calming Guide,
- K. Traffic Operation Policy Directives (TOPD)
- L. Traffic Safety Bulletins,

~~07-09~~ Any revisions to these supplemental documents shall conform to, or not contravene or negate, any Standard and Guidance statements, figures, or tables of the California MUTCD.

~~08~~ ~~If there is a discrepancy between the supplemental documents and the California MUTCD, the California MUTCD shall govern.~~

Support:

~~09-10~~ Following information can be used to access some of these publications referenced:

- A. Caltrans Manuals <https://dot.ca.gov/manuals>
- B. Caltrans Safety Program <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/safety-programs>
- C. Caltrans Traffic Operations <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations>

Standard:

~~10-11~~ The latest edition of Caltrans' California Sign Specifications shall be a part of this manual. If there are any ~~discrepancies~~**differences** between the Sign Specifications and the California MUTCD, the California MUTCD shall govern. California Sign Specifications shall conform to, or not contravene or negate, any Standard and Guidance statements, figures or tables of the California MUTCD.

Option:

~~12~~ The specifications and requirements for traffic control devices contained in the Sign Specifications may be more stringent (higher standard) than those in the California MUTCD.

Support:

~~14-13~~ Refer to the following web link for Caltrans' California Sign Specifications: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/safety-programs/sign-specs>