

# The signing system

There are three basic types of traffic sign: signs that give orders, signs that warn and signs that give information. Each type has a different shape. A further guide to the function of a sign is its colour. All triangular signs are red.



**Circles**  
give orders



**Triangles**  
warn



**Rectangles**  
inform



**Blue** circles generally give a mandatory instruction, such as "turn left", or indicate a route available only to particular classes of traffic, e.g. buses and cycles only



**Red** rings or circles tell you what you must not do, e.g. you must not exceed 30mph, no vehicles over the height shown may proceed



**Blue** rectangles are used for information signs **except** on motorways where blue is used for direction signs



**Green** rectangles are used for direction signs on primary routes



**White** rectangles are used for direction signs on non-primary routes, or for plates used in combination with warning and regulatory signs



There are a few exceptions to the shape and colour rules, to give certain signs greater prominence. Examples are the "STOP" and "GIVE WAY" signs

The words "must" or "must not", when used in the descriptions that follow, refer to legal requirements that have to be obeyed.

## More information on Directgov

You can find related information on roads and traffic on Directgov. Click on the link or use the web address underneath.

[www.direct.gov.uk/motorwaysandroads](http://www.direct.gov.uk/motorwaysandroads)