

# Tech Notes

## MUTCD REVISIONS PART 7: TRAFFIC CONTROL FOR SCHOOL AREAS

Tech Note #58

### Fluorescent Yellow-Green Color

#### REQUIRED FOR SCHOOL AND SCHOOL BUS SIGNS



S1-1 and W16-7P

OPTIONAL FOR PEDESTRIAN, BIKE, AND  
PLAYGROUND SIGNS



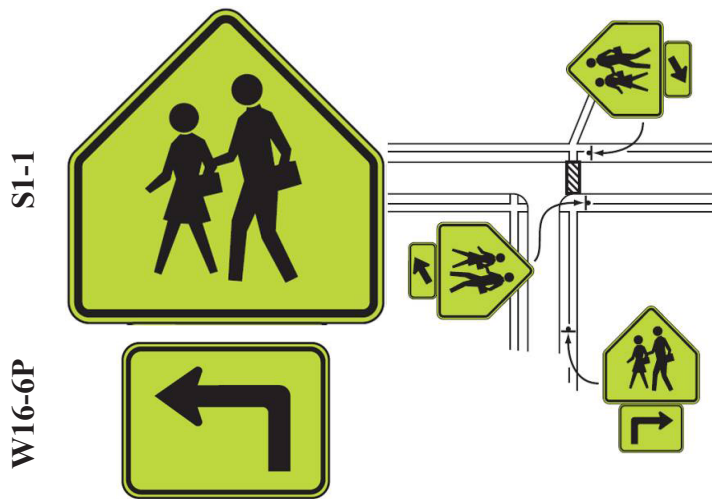
The use of a fluorescent yellow-green (FYG) background is changed from an **option to a requirement** for school and school bus warning stops. The option to use a fluorescent yellow-green background for warning signs associated with pedestrians, bicyclists, and playgrounds is retained. FYG provides enhanced conspicuity, particularly during dawn and twilight periods. In the intervening years since the FYG background color was introduced as an option, most highway agencies have adopted policies to use this color for school warning signs and many have also decided to use it for all warning signs associated with pedestrians and bicycles. This change will provide more uniformity and consistency in school warning signing.



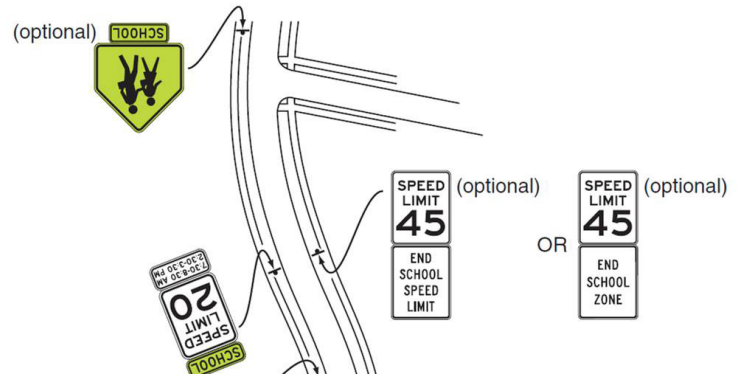
S3-2

The use of FYG pixels when the “SCHOOL” message is displayed on a changeable message sign for a school speed limit is now **required** rather than an option.

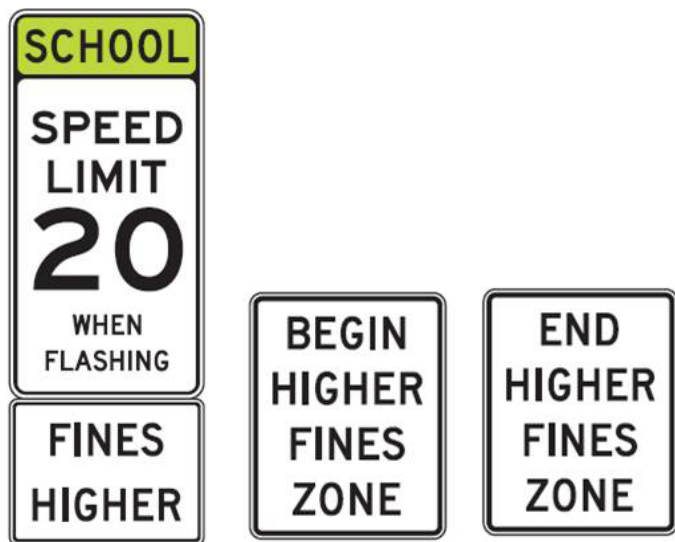
A new **SCHOOL BUS TURN AHEAD** word sign is **added**. It can be installed in advance locations where school buses turn around on roadways at a location not visible to approaching users for a distance as determined by Table 2C-4.



**END SCHOOL SPEED LIMIT or  
END SCHOOL ZONE sign required at end of  
reduced school speed limit zone**



An **option is added** that permits the use of a W16-5P or W16-6P supplemental arrow plaque (FYG color) below a school sign in locations where a school area or zone or school crosswalk that is located on a cross street is in close proximity to an intersection. This change provides jurisdictions with flexibility for installing signs where there is not sufficient distance for advance signing on the cross street.



The existing requirement regarding the use of either a **SPEED LIMIT** sign or an **END SCHOOL ZONE** sign at the end of an authorized and posted school speed zone is **changed to a requirement** that the end of a designated school zone shall be marked with an **END SCHOOL SPEED LIMIT** or an **END SCHOOL ZONE** sign, as it is important and sometimes legally necessary to mark the end points of designated school zones.

The use of only a **SPEED LIMIT** sign at the end of a school zone could unintentionally result in some drivers speeding up before the actual end of the school zone, or could result in some drivers continuing to drive at the reduced speed if they fail to interpret the **SPEED LIMIT** sign as indicating the end of the school zone. Therefore, the use of an **END SCHOOL SPEED LIMIT** or **END SCHOOL ZONE** sign is mandatory at the end of the school zone. However, to retain the option for jurisdictions to post the speed limit for the section of highway that is downstream from the school zone, a new option is being added permitting a standard **SPEED LIMIT** sign to be mounted on the same post as the **END SCHOOL SPEED LIMIT** or **END SCHOOL ZONE** sign.

A new section numbered and titled Section 7B.10 Higher Fines Zone Signs and Plaques has been **added**. The **BEGIN HIGHER FINES ZONE (R2-10)** sign, **END HIGHER FINE ZONE (R2-11)** sign, and **FINES HIGHER (R2-6P)** plaques have been adopted and these signs have been incorporated into Figure 7B-1 and Table 7B-1. To illustrate the use of the signs in Section 7B.10, the title of Figure 7B-2 has been revised to “Example of Signing for a Higher Fines School Zone without a School Crossing” and a new figure, numbered and titled “Figure 7B-5 -- Example of Signing for a Higher Fines School Zone with a School Speed Limit” has been added.

Also, an **option is added** to allow the use of an **END SCHOOL ZONE (S5-2)** sign in place of an **END HIGHER FINES ZONE (R2-11)** sign and an **END SCHOOL SPEED LIMIT (S5-3)** sign combination.



The existing **SCHOOL BUS STOP AHEAD** word message is **replaced** with a symbol sign that features a school bus with a depiction of red flashing lights and students getting off a bus. This change is based on positive experiences in West Virginia and Canada, where a similar symbol sign for this message has been used for 25-30 years.

Regarding the criteria for using this sign, the specific distance of 500 feet that a stopped school bus should be visible to road users is **replaced** by “an adequate distance.” The visibility of the high-mounted red flashers located at the top of rear of the school bus are much more readily visible for the **SCHOOL BUS STOP AHEAD** sign than for a bus without its flashers activated for the **SCHOOL BUS STOP AHEAD** sign.

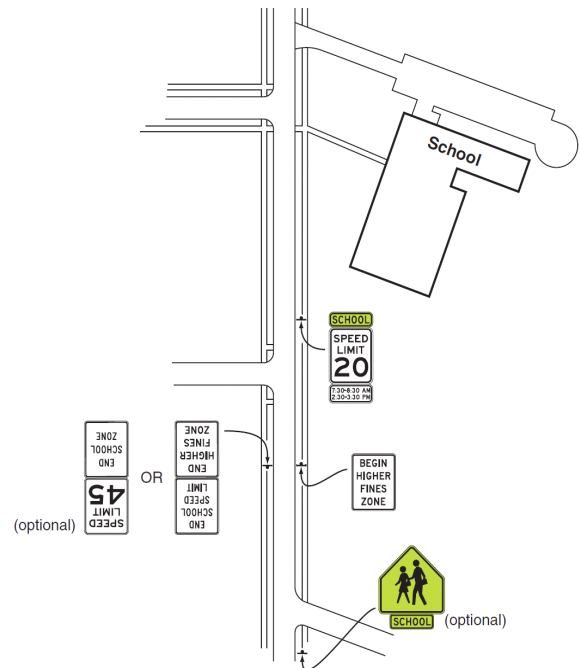


R1-6b

OR



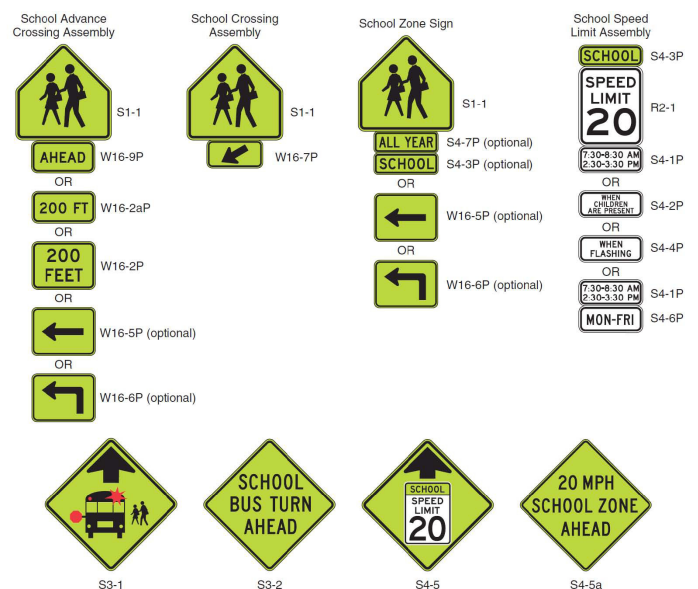
R1-6c



A **new** figure has also been added that illustrates the use of the school sign and the **HIGHER FINES ZONE** sign for a higher fines school zone that also has a reduced school speed limit.

A **new recommendation** is added to increase the distance between the beginning point of a reduced school zone speed limit and the school crossing where the school speed limit is 30 mph or higher. This recommendation was added based on research recently published by the Texas Transportation Institute.

### FYG COLOR REQUIRED FOR ALL SCHOOL WARNING SIGNS



To reflect an Official Interpretation, a **new option** is added that when used at a school crossing, the In-Street Pedestrian sign may use the schoolchildren symbol rather than the pedestrian symbol.



## Operating procedures for adult crossing guards changed from recommended to required

- Shall not direct traffic in the usual law enforcement regulatory sense
- Shall pick opportune times to create a sufficient gap in traffic flow
- Shall stand in roadway
- Shall use a STOP paddle



In Section 7D.05 (old Section 7E.05 in 2003 *MUTCD*) Operating Procedures for Adult Crossing Guards, the GUIDANCE statement is **changed** to a STANDARD, thereby making all of the paragraphs requirements, rather than recommendations. Because the safety of schoolchildren is paramount, it is important that adult crossing guards follow specific requirements when controlling traffic for the purpose of assisting schoolchildren.

The *MUTCD* recommends that an adult school crossing guard be uniformed so that street users and pedestrians can recognize the guard and respond to a guard's signals. The guard uniform should be distinctively different from those worn by regular law enforcement officers.

The *MUTCD* recommends that a guard use a STOP paddle as the primary hand-signaling device. States and local governments have addressed hand-signaling devices in a variety of ways. Some jurisdictions require the use of a STOP paddle, others recommend its use, and yet others recommend its use in conjunction with

hand-signals. The *MUTCD* sets guidelines on a STOP paddle's shape, size, and design. Other potential pieces of equipment include gloves, a hat and whistle. Wearing a hat gives a guard a more official appearance and can enhance his/her visibility as well as protect the guard from sun, cold, and rain. Whistles may help a guard gain the attention of children at noisy intersections.

If guards are equipped with two-way radios or cell phones, they must be used only in emergencies. A guard should **NEVER** answer the phone or radio while crossing children. In fact, some agencies prohibit cell phones to avoid distractions.

As a locality identifies what type of equipment to use, it should also decide on guidelines that will explain when equipment is considered unsuitable for use. For example, a guard should not use old, defaced or worn out STOP paddles or safety vests that are faded or no longer reflective.

## Adult school crossing guards and law enforcement personnel must wear Class 2 high-visibility apparel labeled as ANSI 107-2004 on non-Federal-aid highways

- Compliance date: **DECEMBER 31, 2011**

This NEW **requirement** incorporates into the *MUTCD* provisions of 23 CFR Part 634 that were published in the Federal Register on November 24, 2006. Required compliance of apparel for all workers, including police on Federal-aid highways has been in effect since November 24, 2008, pursuant to 23 CFR Part 634.

