



Department
for Transport

Consultation: The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016

August 2015

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Foreword

Great Britain is widely acknowledged to have one of the best traffic signing systems in the world. The signs, in use since 1964, have become instantly recognisable and a familiar part of our everyday lives. This has played a key role in creating our good road safety record.

While the signs themselves continue to perform well, it has become clear that the legislation that underpins them, the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions, is out of date and in need of an overhaul. To help work out how it should change, we carried out a complete review of signing policy culminating in 'Signing the Way', published in 2011, which set out recommendations for delivering a modernised Statutory Instrument.

The new version (which will replace the 2002 version as amended) has been completely restructured to provide significant deregulation and a new approach for local authorities in delivering their traffic management and traffic signs. It's worth noting that on the whole the appearance of the signs themselves to road users will not change. This is about creating a flexible legislative framework for the future, rather than new signs. This has been the most comprehensive overhaul of traffic signs in the last 50 years.

We have conducted extensive levels of stakeholder engagement including a full public consultation last year and a series of roadshows across Britain to promote and explain the new policies with workshops to embed the new ways of working. The statutory instrument applies to England, Scotland and Wales and we have worked closely with the devolved administrations in its development.

Primarily, this consultation is about a small number of policies which were not part of the earlier public consultation but which we propose are included in the new version of the statutory instrument alongside the matters that have already been the subject of public consultation.

More generally, the final question invites comment on the style of drafting the Department proposes to use for the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016. A draft instrument is at Annex B. We expect to deliver this in the spring of 2016.

Executive summary

Introduction

- 1 This consultation seeks your views on some further policies we are proposing to include in the new traffic signs regulations. These are:
 - Using 'remove by' dates on some temporary signs
 - Inviting new ideas or initiatives to help reduce traffic sign clutter
 - Traffic Regulation Orders for unrestricted parking bays
 - Requirements for signs in street lit areas to be retro-reflective
 - Applying the directions on the mounting and backing of permanent signs to portable and temporary variable message signs
 - Tunnel restriction code signing
 - Height, width and length limit signs to show both imperial and metric units of measurement
 - Changes to road markings - route number brackets
 - Permit road studs to incorporate only light emitting diodes
 - Further comments
- 2 The public consultation carried out in May-June 2014 covered all of the issues that we had identified as being of interest at that point. The technical peer review earlier this year gave the traffic signs industry a further opportunity to look in greater detail at an advanced draft of the regulations. In the course of this work, the expected date to bring the new regulations into force changed from 2015 to 2016.

How to respond

The consultation period began on 28 August 2015 and will run until 6 October 2015. Please ensure that your response reaches us before the closing date.

Please respond by completing the consultation response form at Annex A and emailing it back to traffic.signs@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Alternatively send your response to us at the address below.

Traffic Signs Consultation
Traffic Division, Department for Transport,
Zone 3/27, Great Minster House,
33 Horseferry Road,
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When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If responding on behalf of a larger organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents and, where applicable, how the views of members were assembled.

Freedom of Information

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

If you want information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence.

In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information, we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA) and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

1. Tackling sign clutter

Background

- 1.1 The over-provision of traffic signs can have a detrimental impact on the environment, and can dilute more important messages, resulting in information overload for drivers.
- 1.2 Some of the most common traffic signs left in place longer than allowed are signs indicating a change in the road layout, for example "NEW ROUNDABOUT AHEAD" shown below:



Permitted variants:

"NEW ROUNDABOUT" may be varied to:

1. "CHANGED PRIORITIES"
2. "GAP CLOSED"
3. "NEW ONE WAY SYSTEM"
4. "NEW ROAD LAYOUT"
5. "NEW TRAFFIC ISLANDS"
6. "NEW TRAFFIC SIGNALS"
7. "NEW ZEBRA CROSSING"
8. "SIGNAL PRIORITIES CHANGED"
9. "SIGNAL TIMINGS CHANGED"

- 1.3 These signs are only allowed to be used for a maximum of 3 months following completion of the works, but are often left in place longer.
- 1.4 We propose that this sign has a 'remove by' date on the back of it, so that the date by which a sign ought to have been removed is clear. This change might, for instance, lead to members of the public letting the local highway authority know if it is not taken down within the time limit.

The decluttering taskforce

- 1.5 Overuse of traffic signs blights our landscape, costs local authorities money, and dilutes important road safety messages. Whilst the Department is responsible for the legislation setting out what signs look like and mean, decisions about which traffic signs to place and where is a matter for local authorities.

1.6 Reducing sign clutter remains a priority for the Department, and to help move this forward the Secretary of State has appointed Sir Alan Duncan MP to lead a taskforce looking into the issues. To inform this work we would like to hear your ideas for reducing sign clutter.

Question 1

1A) Do you agree that a "remove by date" should be placed on the back of "NEW ROUNDABOUT AHEAD" signs and their variants?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

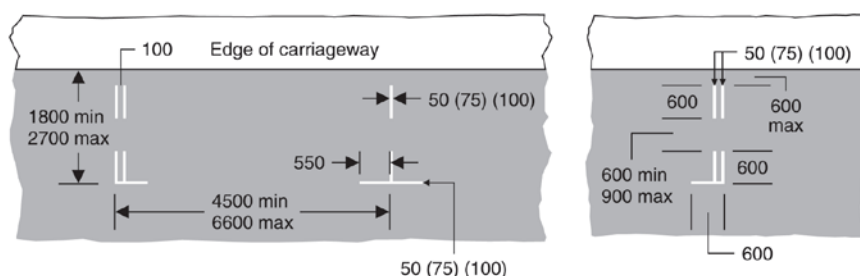
Comments

1B) Please tell us about any ideas or initiatives which would help to reduce traffic sign clutter

2. Traffic Regulation Orders for unrestricted parking bays

Background

- 2.1 We are proposing to allow parking bays that have no restrictions on their use to be placed without the need for a Traffic Regulation Order.



1032
Parking bay marked with individual parking spaces
(Longitudinal marking)

- 2.2 Local authorities use Traffic Regulation Orders to apply traffic management controls, to specify parking restrictions and the conditions under which vehicles may be parked. Bays can be placed that have no restrictions or enforcement associated with them, and removing the need to make a Traffic Regulation Order would enable traffic authorities to install them more quickly and cheaply.
- 2.3 In 2002 we removed the need for a Traffic Regulation Order for yellow box markings and bus stop clearways and there is no evidence from the implementation of these to suggest that local authorities would not continue to undertake effective consultation in order to meet the needs and expectations of their local residents.
- 2.4 Members of the public also have the opportunity to challenge the parking policy decisions of councils under the new 'Right to Challenge Parking Policies' introduced at the end of the last Parliament.
- 2.5 It is worth noting that a parking bay with a legend where there is no upright sign (e.g. a loading bay with just a road marking 'LOADING ONLY' that operates 24 hours a day 7 days a week) will still require a Traffic Regulation Order.

Question 2

Do you agree that we should remove the need for a Traffic Regulation Order for unrestricted parking bays?

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Comments

3. Signs in street lit areas

Background

- 3.1 Street lighting plays an important role in road safety, as well as ensuring the personal safety of pedestrians. Decisions on street lighting should be a local decision by elected local councillors, reflecting local circumstances - especially in relation to any concerns about crime
- 3.2 If local authorities have roads with street lighting (at least three lamps not more than 183 metres apart) that are not lit at night, it becomes more important to ensure that signs in these areas that are required to be lit for safety and enforcement purposes are still visible to road users
- 3.3 For example a warning of a height limit ahead not visible could result in a heavy goods vehicle hitting an overhead structure.
- 3.4 The current requirement is that such signs “may” additionally be retroreflective. We now propose to say that such signs “must” also be retroreflective if the street lighting is switched off during part of the hours of darkness.
- 3.5 We understand through talking to industry that nearly all signs visible to moving traffic are now retroreflective. We do not therefore anticipate there being any increased costs associated with providing this type of sign.

Question 3

3A) Do you agree that signs on roads with street lighting (at least three lamps not more than 183 metres apart) that is not lit at night must also be made retroreflective?

Yes

No

Comments

3B) Do you foresee any additional financial costs?

Yes

No

If you have answered yes what do you estimate these costs to be?

4. Temporary variable message signs.

Background

- 4.1 It has become common to see the space on the back and supports of portable and temporary variable message signs being used to display information relating to the supplier of the signs or slogans. While some contact information is useful, for example to aid reporting of faulty equipment, these spaces should not be used for advertising. As with permanent signs, supports and backing for variable message signs should be free of distracting information.
- 4.2 We propose to clarify that the directions applying to the mounting and backing of permanent signs also apply to portable and temporary variable message signs. These are that the support components shall each be any single colour or in their natural colour. The back of the sign shall be coloured grey, black or be in a non-reflective metallic finish.
- 4.3 A maintenance identification code and ownership information may be indicated on the support or back of the sign in characters not exceeding 25 millimetres in height. Information about the manufacture of the sign in order to comply with standards may be indicated on the back in characters not exceeding 5 millimetres.

Question 4

Do you agree that the directions applying to the mounting and backing of permanent signs should also apply to portable and temporary variable message signs?

Yes

No

Comments

5. Tunnel restriction code signing

Background

- 5.1 Tunnel restriction codes apply to vehicles carrying dangerous goods through larger road tunnels, and specify what types and quantities of dangerous goods may be taken through tunnels and under what circumstances. The codes are specified in Chapter 1.9 of Part 1 of Annex A to [the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road \(ADR\)](#) as applicable from 1 January 2015.
- 5.2 The ADR requires signs to be placed indicating these restrictions. Accordingly we are including the tunnel restriction code sign shown below to indicate a prohibition for certain vehicles carrying dangerous goods within regulated tunnels. Each tunnel is categorised A to E, with A being the least restrictive and E being the most i.e. all dangerous goods vehicles. They are based on the three major dangers in tunnels - explosions, release of toxic gas and fires.



Question 5

Do you have any comment on the inclusion of the tunnel restriction code sign?

Yes

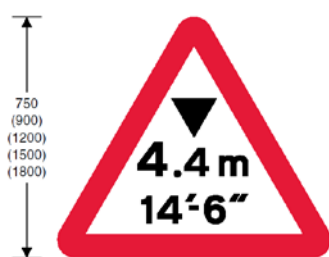
No

Comments

6. Dual unit height, width and length limit signs

Background

- 6.1 Signs that indicate height, width and length limits in both imperial and metric units have been prescribed for some time. We are proposing that in future signs indicating height, width and length limits must show both imperial and metric units of measurement.
- 6.2 Existing signs showing only imperial units will be able to remain in place until they become life-expired, or are replaced during routine maintenance, at which time the dual-unit equivalent must be used.



An example of a sign showing dual imperial and metric units

- 6.3 It is felt that there are a number of lorry drivers on our roads who may not be familiar with imperial units of measurement, particularly younger drivers who may not have been taught imperial measurements at school.
- 6.4 This lack of understanding has been implicated in incidents of bridges being struck by over height vehicles. In 2014/15 over 1600 bridge strikes were reported at rail-over-road bridges. This is a safety issue, which also causes delays to both road and rail users, and leads to costly repairs to road and rail infrastructure.
- 6.5 The Department has no plans to change the units of measurement on any other signs. Unlike height, width or length, miles and miles per hour are widely recognised and understood as a measure of distance and speed.

Question 6

Do you agree that we should only prescribe dual unit (imperial and metric) height, width and length limit signs?

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Comments

7. Road marking route number brackets

Background

- 7.1 We are proposing to allow brackets to be used for any route number road markings. This will give local authorities more options to show primary routes, compass points as in 'M1 (N)' rather than 'M1N' and destinations, making it easier for drivers to navigate.

Question 7

Are you content for us to prescribe bracketed road number markings?

Yes

No

Please explain your choice here.

8. Regulate for road studs that only incorporate light emitting diodes.

Background

- 8.1 The regulation for illumination of road markings requires studs to incorporate reflectors or retroreflecting material. Advances in technology have led to the development of studs that include only light emitting diodes, hardwired in tunnels and solar powered elsewhere. We propose amending the regulation to accommodate this technology. Traditional studs use reflectors or retroreflecting material which rely on headlight beams for their illumination. Active studs use internal light emitting diodes as their light source giving extended visibility distances and better performance in poor weather conditions over traditional studs.

Question 8

Are you content for us to regulate for studs that only have light emitting diodes?

Yes

No

Please explain your choice here.

9. The draft Regulations and General Directions

Background

- 9.1 Finally, you are invited to comment on the structure and clarity the Department is proposing to use for the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016. This part of the consultation is not about the policies. (The current draft is at Annex B.)
- 9.2 Our aim has been to produce a draft that is useable whilst at the same time rigorous in ensuring the requirements are properly implemented in law.

Comments



- 9.3 An updated impact assessment is at Annex C.
- 9.4 A summary of responses, including the next steps, will be published within three months of the consultation closing on 6 October 2015. Paper copies will be available on request.
- 9.5 If you have questions about this consultation please contact:

What will happen next?

A summary of responses, including the next steps, will be published within three months of the consultation closing on 6 October 2015. Paper copies will be available on request.

If you have questions about this consultation please contact:

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October