

D4 Signage and provision of information

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Purpose

This module aims to promote good signage and information provision for pedestrians.

Introduction

Good signage and information provision fulfil a number of essential functions, including:

- ▶ providing information to aid navigation, especially for new users of a location
- ▶ indicating locations of facilities
- ▶ indicating the length of sections of the pedestrian journey to encourage informed use of the facility
- ▶ providing warning of any hazards (see Figure D4-1)
- ▶ indicating when particular regulations apply.



Source: ARRB

Figure D4-1

Signage ensures that users of facilities are advised of any unexpected hazards

Indicating particular regulations or restrictions is particularly important in shared zones, where road users other than pedestrians are reminded of restrictions applying to them, such as speed restrictions.

Good signing is particularly important for:

- ▶ people with disabilities, to prevent wrong choices of direction that cost additional effort
- ▶ tourists and other visitors, who may be unfamiliar with the area, who may have limited time available, and who may be unfamiliar with English.

Poor practice can lead to unnecessary frustration, increased risk to pedestrians and a reduction in walking.

D4.1 Design principles and standards

Signs relevant to pedestrian areas are described in the following documents, together with advice regarding their use.

Main Roads Manual of uniform traffic control devices (MUTCD)

The MUTCD is a quality-controlled document produced by the Traffic and Road Use Management section of the Queensland Department of Main Roads. The manual outlines signage practice for Queensland, including any necessary departures from AS 1742.

This document should be the starting point for all signage design and maintenance activities for pedestrian and related facilities in Queensland. The manual contains the following sections:

- ▶ **Part 1: General introduction and sign illustrations**
Outlines the numbering systems for signs used in the manual, and explains the basic elements of signs in relation to size, shape, colouring and lettering (see Figure D4-2 for an example).
- ▶ **Part 2: Traffic control devices for general use**
Describes requirements for traffic control devices for general use on roads, including layout of signage. Includes signage at intersections (such as



Source: Main Roads 2003, MUTCD, Part 9, Section 10.2.2

Figure D4-2

Sign W6-1A



Source: Main Roads 2003, MUTCD, Section 2.7.4

Figure D4-3

Sign R2-10

'Give Way to Pedestrians', see Figure D4-3), and guidelines for the content, location, mounting and distance of directional and guide signs.

- ▶ **Part 3: Works on roads**

Specifies the traffic control devices to be used at work sites on roads, footpaths, shared paths and bicycle paths. Highlights planning, risk, traffic, device and installation requirements, including the need to ensure that all pedestrian needs are met. Relevant signs, including pedestrian warning and redirection signs, are provided (see Figure D4-4 for an example).

- ▶ **Part 4: Speed controls**

Details the signs required for the regulatory control of traffic speed and provides guidance on how to establish consistent and appropriate speed limits. Includes advice on Area Speed Zones and the hierarchy of typical speed limits, including shared and special area zones. An Internet-based expert system is currently being developed for Queensland Transport by ARRB Transport Research and will be available for use at <www.qlimits.com.au>.

- ▶ **Part 5: Street name and community facility name signs**

Contains advice on the design of community facility name signs and street name signs. Although this type of information is intended primarily for motorists, it may be appropriate to provide it in pedestrian environments.



Source: Main Roads 2003, MUTCD, Section 3.14.2

Figure D4-4

Sign T8-1



Source: Main Roads 2003, MUTCD, Part 7, Sections 6.1, 9.3.1

Figure D4-5

Sign W7-14-1

- ▶ **Part 6: Service and tourist signs**

Details the road-based traffic control devices related to services, tourist facilities and establishments, and national trail route signing. The adoption of similar signing practice in pedestrian areas will build on key message, image and colour recognition.

- ▶ **Part 7: Railway crossings**

Specifies the traffic control devices for use in advance of and at railway crossings. Includes various signs related to pedestrian movements at railway crossings (see Figure D4-5 for an example).

- ▶ **Part 8: Freeways**

Includes signage and layout related to the prohibition of pedestrians in freeway environments (GE6-2, R6-13 etc.).

- ▶ **Part 9: Bicycle facilities**

Includes details of signage and pavement markings for use with both on-road and off-road bicycle and shared facilities. Also provides recommendations for guide signs and navigation information for cyclists.

- ▶ **Part 10: Pedestrian control and protection**

Describes regulatory signs and pavement markings to be used at pedestrian crossings and to advise of shared zones (i.e. areas where motor vehicles, subject to speed restrictions, share the space with pedestrians), and signs to warn motorists of the presence of pedestrians,





Source: Main Roads 2003, MUTCD, Section 10.1.15

Figure D4-6
Sign R4-Q01



Source: Main Roads 2003, MUTCD, Section 10.1.7

Figure D4-7
Sign R4-4

pedestrian crossings, children and schools. Also describes pedestrian direction signs, and the use of either pointed sign ends or arrows to indicate directions (see Figures D4-6 to D4-9 for examples), and provides guidance on lighting.

► **Part 11: Parking controls**

Specifies signs and pavement markings for parking, including user restrictions such as parking for disabled people.

► **Part 12: Bus, transit and truck lanes**

Provides details of traffic control device requirements for the designation of bus, transit or truck lanes. Limited implications for pedestrian issues.

► **Part 13: Local area traffic management (LATM)**

Prescribes traffic control devices to be used in conjunction with a range of LATM treatments. Outlines 12 different LATM treatments that can provide benefits for pedestrians in relation to slower speeds of vehicle travel and simpler road crossing points (see Main Roads 2003, MUTCD, Part 13, Table 1). Also provides guidance on planning and development of LATM schemes.

► **Part 14: Traffic signals**

Specifies the type and layout of signals, aspects, displays and pavement markings at signalised locations. Includes a section on pedestrian displays (see Main Roads 2003, MUTCD, Part 14, Section 2.4).



Source: Main Roads 2003, MUTCD, Section 10.3

Figure D4-8
Sign G5-7



Source: Main Roads 2003, MUTCD, Section 10.3

Figure D4-9
Sign G5-8

Other relevant signage guidelines and standards

- *AS 2342.6 The Design and Use of Graphic Symbols and Public Information Symbol Signs, Part 6: Guidelines for the Implementation of Symbol Sign Systems*

Advises on the use of arrows with symbols to indicate direction, conspicuousness and legibility issues, and siting.

- *AS 2899.1 Public information Symbol Signs, Part 1: General Information Signs*

Shows a range of symbol signs which may be applicable in pedestrian spaces, for example, indicating forms of public transport, currency exchange, left luggage, cafeteria, restaurant, litter bins, lift and stairs.

- *AS 2899.2 Public Information Symbol Signs, Part 2: Water Safety Signs*

Advises consideration of an integrated system incorporating essential water safety signs with pedestrian direction and facility signs. As a general rule, signs indicating that an activity is permitted should be provided as part of the direction signage at two places: at some distance from the activity location to direct pedestrians towards it, as well as at the location. Warning or prohibition signs should be provided only at locations where warnings or prohibitions apply.



Figure D4-10
Customised signage can form part of the branding of an area

D4.2 Customised signage systems

Although the standards listed above provide a basic 'toolkit' for pedestrian signing, many owners of outdoor spaces often wish to 'brand' their municipality or facility using a more attractive form of signing, either acquired from an existing supplier's range or developed specially for the facility (see Figure D4-10 and the case study 'Bristol Legible City'). If this approach is adopted, it is important to follow some basic principles if the signing is to be effective:

- Maintain good contrast between the lettering and symbols and their background. Light lettering on a dark background and dark lettering on a light background are both acceptable, as long as there is good contrast.
- Maintain adequate stroke width and spacing for the letters and symbols.
- Whatever lettering style is adopted, the aim should be to ensure that a sign can be read from the same distance as an equivalent sign using the G5-7/G5-8 format shown in Figures D4-8 and D4-9.
- Avoid extreme departures from the lettering styles in the *Manual of uniform traffic control devices*. Minor departures such as using typefaces with serifs or in the lower case Helvetica typeface are

Case study: Bristol Legible City, UK

Over the years, many cities around the world have attempted to create integrated information and navigation systems for the benefit of visitors, locals and business. One of the most successful recent schemes is the Bristol Legible City project in the United Kingdom (see Figure D4-11).

The essence of the concept is to unify the information that people need to help them get about and find things, and connect with public transport or convenient routes and car parking. Providing information does not of itself encourage people to spend time at a destination, but it can help attract them by making them more aware of what the location offers.

Key features of the project include:

- integrated signs, maps and printed matter
- a defined primary pedestrian network
- large-scale maps of the area at key decision points, orientated in the direction the person is looking, with 3-dimensional representations of major buildings to assist orientation
- extensive documentation of the project in a series of reports dealing with the basic principles, implementation and management of partnerships, as well as a comprehensive website (http://www.bristol-city.gov.uk/aboutbris/Bristol_legible_city.html).

Evaluations so far indicate a positive outcome for visitors and businesses.



Source: Bristol City (UK)

Figure D4-11
Pedestrian information in Bristol



unlikely to have an adverse impact, but lettering styles with extreme distortions or narrow stroke widths will reduce the distance from which the sign can be read.

- ▶ On no account change regulatory or warning symbol signs. A misinterpretation of a sign that is not the approved standard sign could have dire legal implications.

D4.3 Community input

Involving the community in determining signage needs is essential to ensure that all information needs are met. Consultation with user groups, businesses in the area and other stakeholders is essential in the early stages of establishing a new signing and information scheme. It is to be expected that the environment and the range of facilities or attractions in a location, and the groups of users attracted will change over time. As people's information needs will also change, stakeholders should be consulted from time to time and the provision of signage reviewed as a result.

The most productive way of consulting stakeholders would be to ask them who will be using the facility,

what the users will be looking for, how they will get there, and where they will move on to next. In this way, a number of scenarios can be established to reflect the movement patterns of a range of typical users. These can then be used to establish what the information needs of users at different points are likely to be, and then to establish a comprehensive navigation and information system.

References

Main Roads 2003, *Manual of uniform traffic control devices* (MUTCD), Queensland Department of Main Roads, Brisbane.

Standards Australia, AS 2342.6 The Design and Use of Graphic Symbols and Public Information Symbol Signs, Part 6: Guidelines for the Implementation of Symbol Sign Systems, Standards Australia, Sydney.

Standards Australia, AS 2899.1 Public Information Symbol Signs, Part 1: General Information Signs, Standards Australia, Sydney.

Standards Australia, AS 2899.2 Public Information Symbol Signs, Part 2: Water Safety Signs, Standards Australia, Sydney.

