This factsheet provides guidance on the selection of appropriate lane status signs. Lane status signs are used to indicate a closure of a lane on a road with two or more lanes in one direction, also known as a multi-lane roadway. The Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) Part 3 must be used to design static work sites. A lane status sign must be placed after initial road work warning sign(s) but prior to the commencement of the lane closure. Lane status signs provide drivers with advance warning of a specific action a driver may be required to take e.g. merge or accommodate other merging vehicles.

**Use of lane status signs:**
- can be used as either a stand-alone sign or part as of a multi-message sign.
- are not required where an added through or turn lane is closed (a No Right Turn sign or No Left Turn sign shall be used as appropriate).
- shall be used only to give advance warning of lane closures and not instead of adequate signing and delineation of the closure.
- may be made with removable and interchangeable symbols (e.g. magnetic pieces) so that the number and location of lane symbols can be varied to suit the particular lane closure in operation. Signs designed to show more than three lanes may also be used.
- whenever practicable, signs should be placed on both sides of the roadway. If signs are not placed on both sides, you must conduct a risk assessment and document your reasons.

Refer to MUTCD Part 3 Cl 3.8.2

**Common misuse of lane status signs includes:**
- placing them where they are not fully visible to approaching road users.
- selecting signs that do not accurately reflect the number of lanes or the configuration of the open and closed lanes on a multi-lane roadway.
- locating them too close to other important signs or other locations where road users need to make a decision, providing road users with insufficient time to react to changed conditions.
- not duplicating them in the median where practicable, without appropriate documented reasons.
- installing them on a side road to indicate open and closed lanes on the through/major road.
- using tape to modify signage (which may lose adhesion or not be clearly understandable).

Refer to MUTCD Part 3 Cl 3.8.2 and MUTCD Part 3 Cl 4.7.3
Complex Lane Configuration

Lane status signs shall be installed at dimension D (refer to MUTCD Part 3 Table 4.10) in advance of the work area for the closure of one lane. Where a lane status sign is required to warn motorists of the closure of two or more traffic lanes, the lane status sign shall be placed a minimum distance of 2D in advance of the work area.

Long work sites or work sites in urban areas may involve one or changes to lane configurations along the length of the work site. The spacing required for device set out may result in a sign being located where the number of lanes is different to the number of lanes at the lane closure taper. The first lane status sign may not accurately represent all lane arrangements along the length of the work site, so multiple lane status signs may be required.

While advance warning of the status of new/developing lanes may not be required, the location of additional merge tapers where the number or configuration of lanes has changed will require advance warning.

In these situations:
- additional lane status signs may be required to warn road users about the open/closed status of lanes.
- the key principles still apply: provide sufficient distance between warning signs, and provide sufficient advance warning of changes in road conditions.

Refer to MUTCD Part 3 Cl 4.7.3, Table 4.10
Lane Status Panels in Multi-message Signs

Multi-message signing may consist of a combination of multiple roadwork warning, regulatory signing and traffic instruction messages within a single sign (refer to MUTCD Part 3 Clause 3.3.3).

Multi-message signs can convey up to three messages in the one sign including:

- warning of works activity, road condition, or works personnel
- regulatory restriction (e.g. restrict speed)
- provision of advice to motorists or instructing motorists of recommended actions required

The multi-message sign consists of three panels of linked messages. At least one panel shall be shown at all times.

A range of approved lane status signs are available in a 600 x 600mm format. These can be installed side-by-side in the upper row of a multi-message sign frame to reflect the status of up to four lanes. It is good practice for traffic management companies working on roads to have the full array of approved signs available, particularly when working in urban or complex road environments. Alternatively, magnetic pieces may be used to allow a wide range of arrangements to be displayed.

Some examples of multi-message lane status signs are shown below. In practice, there are many permissible combinations.

Refer to MUTCD Part 3 Cl 3.8 and MUTCD Part 3 Appendix D

Other Issues:

The MUTCD Part 3 Clause 3.8.2 states that a lane status sign should not be used to show a closed turn lane. However, consideration should be given to using lane status signs to indicate when turn lanes remain open (e.g. when the adjacent through lane is closed) or when full length turn lanes (also referred to as trap lanes) are closed.

The MUTCD Part 3 does not include provisions for side road signage that indicates the lane closure status on major roads and these should not be used on side roads. However, advance warning signs shall be installed on all approaches to the work area, including any side roads (refer to MUTCD Part 3 Clause 2.4.1).

Traffic Guidance Schemes must be prepared by a competent person with Traffic Management Design certification.
Other Works on Roads Factsheets related to this topic include:
- Lane Closure Tapers

For more in-depth information on any of these topics refer to the MUTCD in the first instance, and then contact trafficengineering.support@tmr.qld.gov.au if required.