
EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This Note is not part of the Instrument)

This Instrument in Part I consolidates with amendments the Traffic Signs Regulations 1981 (S. I.1981/859), and all subsequent relevant amending Instruments, and incorporates with amendments the Traffic Signs (Speed Limits) Regulations 1969 (S. I.1969/1487). The principal changes are—

1. Regulation 3 imposes deadlines on the replacement of signs rendered obsolete by these new Regulations.

2. A number of new and revised definitions are included in regulation 4.

3. Regulation 5 defines “speed limit” and speed limit signs are now shown in diagrams 670 to 674 in Schedule 2.

4. Regulation 10 additionally applies section 36 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 to the mini-roundabout sign shown in diagram 611.1, to the U-turn prohibition sign shown in diagram 614, to the mandatory height limit signs shown in diagrams 629.2 and 629.2A, to the yellow box markings shown in diagrams 1043, 1044 and 1045, to the “stop” signal for tramcars shown in diagram 3013.1 and to green arrow traffic light signals. The mandatory height limit signs and green arrow traffic light signals are also specified for the purposes of column 5 in Schedule 2 to the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988.

5. Regulation 12 imposes a tighter limit of 10% for the amount by which road markings may be smaller than indicated in the diagrams in Schedule 6. New variations are specified for the heights of raised rib and other profiled road markings.

6. Regulation 14 makes provision for certain signs to be attached to police and road maintenance vehicles.

7. Regulation 15 exempts tramcars and trolley buses from the requirements of the “keep left” sign shown in diagram 610.

8. Regulation 17 specifies the permitted variants, but most of the details of the variants are now itemised in Schedule 16.

9. Regulations 18 to 21 specify the illumination requirements, but most of the details of these requirements are now itemised in Schedule 17.

10. Regulations 22 to 24 redefine the meaning of “buses” and the bus symbol to bring the definitions into line with the Transport Act 1985 and the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981. A period until 1 January 1997 is allowed for traffic regulation orders to be changed where necessary to incorporate the revised definitions.

11. Regulation 26 allows vehicles to cross the continuous line of a double white line system to overtake a road maintenance vehicle, pedal cycle or horse moving at no more than 10 miles per hour provided that the driver can see that it is safe to do so.

12. Regulation 28 extends the list of road markings which must be illuminated by the use of retroreflecting material.

13. Regulation 29 introduces revised requirements for the heights of road markings and the sizes of retroreflecting road studs.

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally made). This item of legislation is currently only available in its original format.

14. Regulation 30 specifies the circumstances in which each type of light signal can be used. New light signals are introduced for controlling tramcars.

15. Regulation 33 now includes a reference to the sign shown in diagram 7011 as well as to the stop line in specifying the significance of red traffic light signals. It also provides an exemption for tramcars from the requirement to stop at the standard red traffic light signal.

16. Regulations 35 and 36 now allows the flashing amber warning signal and matrix signs shown in Schedule 11 to be used on all-purpose dual carriageway roads as well as on motorways.

17. Regulation 38 prescribes a new light signal for pedestrians for use at certain level crossings.

18. Regulation 39 now allows the school warning lights shown in diagram 4004 to be operated when children are crossing whether or not a school crossing patrol is present. This will allow the lights to be controlled by automatic timing devices.

19. Regulation 40 prescribes cattle crossing signs and warning lights for the first time.

20. Regulation 41 prescribes the additional colour of blue legend on a white background for temporary signs to special events.

21. The requirements for road danger lamps in regulation 43 have been simplified by reference to the appropriate technical specifications.

22. Regulation 44 prescribes for the first time flat traffic delineators, and rotating retroreflecting devices for mounting on the top of traffic cones.

23. Regulation 46 prescribes the requirements for a wide range of variable message signs.

24. The Schedules of diagrams have been re-arranged to show separately the signs for level crossings, for bus, tramcar and pedal cycle facilities, and for road works. New signs have been introduced in each category of sign including:

- new designs of warning and regulatory signs for low bridges;
- warning signs for junctions on bends, farm traffic, helicopters, slow lorries, military vehicles, side winds, soft verges, wild fowl and toads;
- regulatory signs for pedestrian zones, weak bridges, taxi ranks, voucher and Pay & Display parking facilities;
- speed limit signs which are now shown in these regulations instead of in a separate Instrument;
- new designs of level crossing signs;
- a new range of signs and signals for tramcars;
- raised rib edge line road markings, a rationalised system of yellow lines for waiting restrictions, and a wider range of hatched markings;
- a revised and extended system of colour-coding by route for directional signs, white on brown signs to tourist attractions, and a wider range of directional signs to off-street car parks;
- a new design of green arrow signal, matrix signs for fog and to indicate the end of restrictions, and new designs of lane control signals;
- a new range of signs for road works.

There is greater use of tabular presentation and cross-referencing to the information relating to a particular sign. A table, giving the cross-references to the appropriate regulations, directions, other diagrams and to the permitted variants and illumination requirements, appears below each diagram in the Schedules. These tables are explained in regulation 7.

Part II of the Instrument consolidates with amendments the Traffic Signs General Directions 1981, which constituted Part II of The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1981

(S. I.1981/859), and all subsequent relevant amending Instruments, and incorporates with amendments Part II of the Traffic Signs (Speed Limits) Regulations and General Directions 1969 (S. I.1969/1487). The principal changes are—

1. The directions have been re-grouped and sub-headings introduced.
2. Direction 3 includes a number of new definitions.
3. Direction 6 requires site approval for the use of the new permitted variant of the hatched marking shown in diagrams 1040 and 1040.2 with a continuous white boundary line.
4. Direction 7 now excludes the yellow box road markings shown in diagrams 1044 and 1045 from the requirement to be supported by a traffic regulation order.
5. Directions 8, 9 and 10 set out the requirements for placing signs at the beginning and end of restrictions, requirements, prohibitions or speed limits, and for repeater signs.
6. Directions 11 to 13 specify which directional signs are to be used only on which types of road in accordance with the new colour-coding system.
7. Directions 20 and 21 specify the new requirements for the use of yellow lines and kerb markings to indicate waiting and loading restrictions. Direction 22 includes provision for dispensing with the need for these markings in certain types of pedestrian zone. Directions 23 and 24 specify which vertical signs shall be used with these markings and clarify the requirements for signing in controlled parking zones.
8. Direction 26 specifies the conditions for the use of the toad warning sign shown in diagram 551.1 in Schedule 1 to the Regulations.
9. Direction 33 restricts the use of the sign to housing developments shown in diagram 2701 in Part VIII of Schedule 7 to the Regulations.
10. Directions 36 and 37 allow the posts and backs of most signs made from aluminium or galvanised metal to remain in their natural colour.
11. Direction 44 now allows the matrix signs shown in Schedule 11 to the Regulations to be used on all-purpose dual carriageway roads as well as on motorways.
12. Direction 49 includes rationalised requirements for the type approval of light signals, matrix signals and variable message signs.

Copies of the British Standard specifications referred to in this Instrument can be obtained from any of the sales outlets operated by the British Standards Institution, or by post from that Institution at Linford Wood, Milton Keynes, MK14 6LE (telephone number 0908 320066).