
EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Instrument)

This Instrument consolidates with substantial amendments the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1994 and their amending instruments. Part I comprises the Traffic Signs Regulations 2002 and their 19 Schedules and Part II consists of the Traffic Signs General Directions 2002 which have one Schedule.

Regulation 1 enables Part I to be cited on its own as the Traffic Signs Regulations 2002 and the whole instrument (i.e. the Regulations and General Directions) to be cited by the collective title of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002. The Regulations consolidated with amendments by Part I are revoked by regulation 2. Regulation 3, however, provides for certain signs prescribed by the Traffic Signs Regulations 1994 or by earlier Regulations, but not prescribed by these new Regulations, to be treated as prescribed by these Regulations until particular dates. Regulations 4–6 make general provisions as to the interpretation of the Regulations and regulation 7 deals with the interpretation of the tables appearing below the diagrams in Schedules 1–13. A general saving for the powers of the Secretary of State, the Scottish Ministers and the National Assembly for Wales to authorise traffic signs of a character not prescribed by the Regulations is contained in regulation 8 and regulation 9 makes it clear that nothing in the Regulations is to have effect to authorise anyone to place signs indicating a temporary obstruction. The relevant Regulations for this purpose are the Traffic Signs (Temporary Obstructions) Regulations 1997 ([S.I. 1997/3053](#)).

Regulation 10 prescribes traffic signs for the purposes of section 36 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 (signs whose indication it is an offence to contravene) and for the purposes of column 5 of Schedule 2 to the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 (signs whose contravention is an offence involving discretionary disqualification). Regulation 11 provides that, subject to the provisions of the Regulations, the sign for conveying information or a warning, requirement, restriction, prohibition or speed limit of the description specified in the caption to a diagram in Schedules 1–7, Part II of Schedule 10 or Schedule 12 must be of the size, colour and type shown in the diagram. Regulation 12 makes provision as to the extent to which it is permissible to vary the dimensions for the signs shown in the diagrams in the Schedules and regulation 13 makes provision as to the proportions and form of letters, numerals, symbols and other characters included in the diagrams. Regulation 14 prescribes signs that can be attached to vehicles.

Regulations 15 and 16 provide for particular warning and regulatory signs; regulation 17 and Schedule 16 make provision as to the permitted variants of the prescribed signs, including variants which are required to be made in particular circumstances. Provision is made for the illumination of signs (including plates) by regulations 18–21 (and Schedule 17) and regulations 20–24 concern buses, bus lanes and bus symbols. Regulations 25–32 and Schedules 6 (road marking diagrams) and 19 (significance of bus stops and bus stand clearway and box junction markings) are concerned with road markings; they indicate the significance of particular markings (regulations 25–29), and specify the permitted variants (regulation 30), the manner of illuminating road markings (regulation 31), the height of markings and the size of studs (regulation 32).

Section 5 (regulations 33–52) concerns light signals and warning lights. Regulations 33–35 prescribe the form of traffic light signals to control vehicular traffic, including portable signals and signals displaying a green arrow. The significance of these signals is prescribed by regulation 36. Equivalent provision is made for light signals for the control of vehicular traffic on motorways and all-purpose dual carriageway roads (regulations 37 and 38), for light signals to control vehicular traffic at level crossings (regulations 39 and 40) and light signals for the control of tramcars (regulations 41

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and 42). The meaning of the expression “stop line” in the regulations relating to light signals is given in regulation 43. Regulations 44 to 46 prescribe light signals for the control of vehicular traffic travelling in lanes and for warning signals and matrix signs for motorways and all-purpose dual carriageway roads. Regulations 47–49 make provision for signals to control traffic crossing the carriageway of roads on which vehicular traffic is controlled by light signals. The crossings thereby created will not be crossings of the kind authorised by section 24 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Crossing facilities for pedestrians provided in conjunction with traffic light signals are prescribed by regulation 47 and regulations 48 and 49 provide for equestrian crossings for horse riders and “Toucan” crossings, which are combined crossings for pedestrians and cyclists. Regulations 50 to 52 provide for warning lights at crossing places for school children, cattle crossing signs and warning lights and light signals for pedestrians at railway level crossings. The diagrams for the various types of light signal are set out in Schedules 8–11 of the Regulations.

Regulations 53 to 58 concern various other traffic signs including temporary signs (regulation 53), flashing beacons (regulation 54), road danger lamps (regulation 55), cones, delineators and cylinders (regulation 56), refuge indicator lamps (regulation 57) and variable message signs (regulation 58 and Schedule 15).

Part II consists of the Traffic Signs General Directions 2002 which are made under section 65 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Direction 5 contains a saving for traffic signs placed in conformity with the Traffic Signs General Directions 1994 (revoked by direction 2) or to be treated as placed in conformity with those Directions. Direction 6 requires the sign shown in diagram 601.1 (“STOP”) only to be placed at a site for the first time with the approval of the Secretary of State, the Scottish Ministers or the National Assembly for Wales and direction 7 specifies those signs which can only be placed to indicate the effect of an order or other statutory provision.

Directions 8–11 concern the placing of signs to indicate the start and finish of restrictions (including speed limits) which apply along lengths of road and the placing of repeater signs along those lengths. Directions 12–15 specify signs that can only be placed on particular types of road and direction 16 specifies the circumstances in which a 20mph speed limit sign can be placed. Directions 17–21 specify signs that can only be placed in conjunction with other specified signs and directions 22–26 make provision as to the placing of signs to indicate waiting restrictions including the boundaries of controlled parking zones.

Directions 27–35 concern various signs which are to be placed only at specified sites or for specified purposes and directions 36–39 restrict the placing of temporary signs. Direction 40 provides that where the sign in diagram 629.1 (vehicles exceeding a specified length prohibited) has been varied to give a metric indication, it must be used in conjunction with a sign giving an imperial indication.

Directions 41–46 concern the mounting and backing of various signs and directions 47–55 relate to signs that include light signals. In particular, direction 49 restricts the use of the zig-zag lines in conjunction with traffic light signals and direction 54 introduces the Schedule to the Directions which concerns the combinations of signs to be used at crossings for pedestrians or equestrians and Toucan crossings. (Zebra, Pelican and Puffin crossings are not affected; these are dealt with by the Zebra, Pelican and Puffin Pedestrian Crossing Regulations 1997, [S.I. 1997/2400](#)). Directions 56–58 concern type approval of signs by the Secretary of State and direction 59 is a general saving for the powers of the Secretary of State, the Scottish Ministers and the National Assembly for Wales to give special directions regarding the placing of traffic signs.

These Regulations were notified in draft to the European Commission in accordance with Directive [98/34/EC](#) as amended by Directive [98/48/EC](#). Copies of the Directives can be obtained from the Stationery Office.