



COLORADO
Department of Transportation



Bicycle “Three Feet Clearance” Sign Guide

2026 Edition

Acknowledgements

Colorado Revised Statutes, Section 1, 42-4-1002

CDOT Strava Metro Data Analysis Summary (2017)

FHWA Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways 11th Edition (2023)

San Lee, CDOT Traffic & Safety Engineering

Esayas Butta, CDOT Traffic & Safety Engineering

Melissa Gende, CDOT Traffic & Safety Engineering

Nathan Rivera, CDOT Traffic & Safety Engineering

Yesenya Saucedo Paez, CDOT Traffic & Safety Engineering

Nathan Vander Broek, CDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Manager

Alazar Tesfaye, Region 1

Tony Brindisi, Region 1

Jason Nelson, Region 2

Matthew Jagow, Region 2

Pepper Whittlef, Region 2

Zane Znamenacek, Region 3

Andi Staley, Region 3

Katrina Kloberdanz, Region 4

Bryce Reeves, Region 4

Jonathan Woodworth, Region 4

Jennifer Allison, Region 5

David Peyton, Region 5



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By HQ Traffic Safety and Engineering

2829 West Howard Place Denver, CO, 80204

Telephone: (303)757-9654

Fax: (303) 757-9219

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Introduction



Figure 1: R4-19

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) has approved the use of the Bicycle Passing Clearance (R4-19) sign from the 2023 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). R4-19 communicates the state law that requires drivers to:

Allow the bicyclist at least a three-foot separation between the right side of the driver's vehicle, including all mirrors or other projections, and the left side of the bicyclist at all times. (Section 1, 42-4-1002, Colorado Revised Statutes)

R4-19 should not be used on roadways with bicycle lanes or with shoulders usable for bicycle travel. The "State Law Motorists Must Give Bicycles 3 ft Clearance" (R4-50_CO), "Share the Road" (W16-1P), and "Bicycle Warning" (W11-1) signs will be replaced with R4-19 as part of the normal sign replacement cycle of W16-1P, W11-1 and R4-50_CO.



Figure 2: Signs Being Replaced

CDOT Regional Traffic Engineers (RTEs) will make the final determination of the use, placement, and scheduling for signing projects which may include R4-19.

Sign Guidance

RTEs should consult CDOT's [High Demand Bicycle Corridor Map](https://www.codot.gov/programs/bikeped/high-demand-bicycle-corridors) (<https://www.codot.gov/programs/bikeped/high-demand-bicycle-corridors>) which identifies four classifications or tiers and may be used in determining the locations for the R4-19. For corridors with more than one tier designation along the project length, the RTE should select the tier that is most appropriate within the project limits. RTE may use other information available at the time to make signing determinations.

Tier 1

Tier 1 corridors have demonstrated very high volumes of bicycle traffic, or high bicycle volumes with history of bicycle crashes, or high volumes of less experienced bicyclists, which are identified as a critical bicycle facility. Signs may be installed on all tier 1 corridors regardless of roadway geometrics and/or posted speed.

Tier 2

Tier 2 corridors have demonstrated high volumes of bicycle traffic, or medium bicycle volumes with a history of bicycle crashes, or medium volumes of less experienced bicyclists. Signs may be installed on tier 2 corridors when all of the following criteria has been met:

- No parallel dedicated facilities available (bike paths)
- Outside lane width less than 14 feet
- Less than 6 feet of rideable continuous paved shoulder width. A shoulder is considered rideable when it's free of permanent infrastructure or obstacles that would prevent safe bicycling such as rumble strips and drainage grates.

Tier 3

Tier 3 corridors have demonstrated medium volumes of bicycle traffic, or low bicycle volumes with a history of bicycle crashes, or low volumes of less experienced bicyclists. Signs may be installed on tier 3 corridors when they meet tier 2 criteria and one of the following:

- Posted speed limit of ≥ 40 miles per hour and AADT of $\geq 10,000$ vehicles per day
- A pattern of severe bicycle crashes on a 5-mile segment, defined by 3 or more crashes resulting in injury or fatality of a bicyclist in the most recent 5 years.

Tier 4

Tier 4 corridors have very low bicycle volumes. Signs are generally not recommended on tier 4 corridors but may be installed on a case-by-case basis as determined by the RTE. An engineering study may be conducted to provide additional information to the RTE in making a determination.

Unclassified

Corridors that have not been given a tier designation should generally not be signed. The RTE may determine if the corridor can be signed if it has had bicycle signage previously or if additional information becomes available through traffic counts or an engineering study.

Engineering Studies

RTE may determine that an engineering study is needed to verify the use of R4-19 signs on any corridor, regardless of tier designation. These studies should include observed bicycle volumes, crash history involving bicyclists, roadway geometry, traffic volumes, and other site-specific information. The RTE may determine to install or not install signage based on this information.

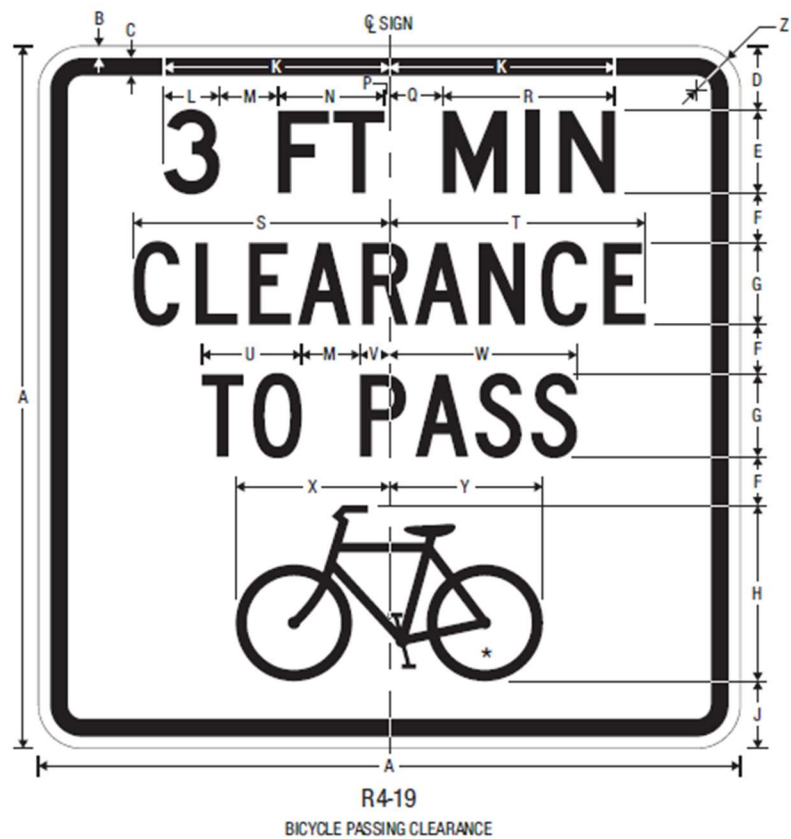
Sign Spacing

When R4-19 signs are used, signs should be installed at the beginning of the section of highway being signed. Additional R4-19 signs may be considered when the following conditions occur:

- Beyond major intersections
- Beyond bicycle trail intersections or locations where bicycle volume will substantially increase
- Where the corridor geometrics change such as narrowing shoulders or lanes
- Other locations as determined by the RTE

Appendix A: R4-19 Design

R4-19
2024 Edition



★ See page 8-4 for symbol design.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	J	K	L	M
30	0.5	0.75	2.75	3.5 D	2.125	3.5 C	7.5	2.875	VAR	VAR	2.5
N	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
4.552	0.202	2.298	7.354	10.942	10.941	4.272	1.254	8.025	6.563	6.562	1.875

COLORS: LEGEND, BORDER — BLACK
BACKGROUND — WHITE (RETROREFLECTIVE)

