



COLORADO
Department of Transportation

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Bicycle “Three Feet Clearance” Sign Guide

2022 Edition

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INTRODUCTION



Figure 1: R4-50_CO

CDOT has approved the use of the Bicycle “Three Feet Clearance” ([R4-50_CO](#)) sign communicating the state law requiring 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)

CDOT Regional Traffic Engineers (RTEs) will make the final determination of the use, placement, and scheduling for signing projects which may include the new sign. The “Share the Road” (W16-1P) and “Bicycle Warning” (W11-1) signs will be replaced with the Bicycle “Three Feet Clearance” sign to promote consistent signage across the state and enhance bicycle safety. The W16-1P and W11-1 signs are still acceptable per the MUTCD, so replacement of these signs may occur over time and should be a part of the normal sign replacement cycle.



Figure 2: Signs Being Replaced

SIGN GUIDANCE

RTEs should consult CDOT’s [High Demand Bicycle Corridor Map](#) (<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 Bicycle “Three Feet Clearance” signs. 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 “Three Feet Clearance” 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 “Three Feet Clearance” signs are used, signs should be installed at the beginning of the section of highway being signed. Additional “Three Feet Clearance” 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

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