



COLORADO
Department of Transportation

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



School Bus Sign Guide

2025 Edition

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Colorado Rules for the Operation,
Maintenance, and Inspection of School
Transportation Vehicles (2024)

Colorado Minimum Standards Governing
School Transportation Vehicles (2024)

FHWA Manual on Uniform Traffic Control
Devices (2024)

Esayas Butta, CDOT Traffic & Safety
Engineering

Anthony Vu, CDOT Traffic & Safety
Engineering

Nathan Rivera, CDOT Traffic & Safety
Engineering

Yesenya Saucedo Paez, CDOT Traffic & Safety
Engineering

Jocelyn Higashide, CDOT Region 1

Pepper Whittlef, CDOT Region 2

Andi Staley, CDOT Region 3

Jonathan Woodworth, CDOT Region 4

Bryce Reeves, CDOT Region 4

Max Dowis, CDOT Region 4

Andrew South, CDOT Region 4

David Peyton, CDOT Region 5



Published on April 03, 2025 by HQ Traffic Safety and Engineering

2829 West Howard Place, 3rd Floor Denver, CO 80204

Telephone: (303) 512-5102

Fax: (303) 757-9219

School Bus Sign Guide

INTRODUCTION

This document provides guidance for installing and maintaining school bus signage (see Figure 1) . The installation of school bus signage shall supplement State regulations or any more rigid standard or policy when deemed necessary by the local board of education/service provider.

REQUEST FOR SIGNAGE

School districts or designated service providers can request for school bus signage on CDOT ROW. External requests will not be considered. Refer to Appendix C for the Sign Request Form. Questions regarding information in this document can be directed to the [Traffic Standards, Specifications, and Policy Engineer](#).

SCHOOL BUS SIGN STANDARD

School bus signage shall only be installed in advance of locations where a school bus is not visible to road users for an adequate distance and there is no opportunity for relocation. Refer to the 11th edition MUTCD Section 7B.04¹ for support.

The final determination to install School Bus signage lies with the CDOT Region Traffic Engineer.

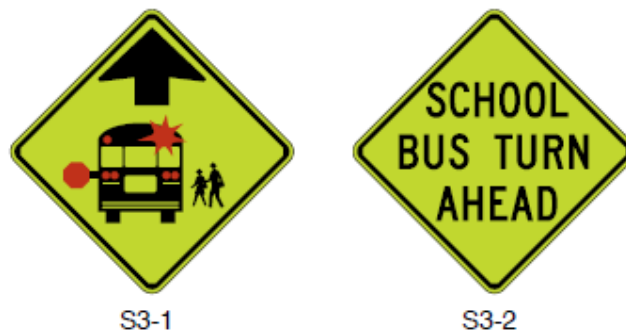


Figure 1: School Bus Signs

¹ “Section 7B.04.” In *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways* , 11th ed., 978, n.d. https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/kno_11th_Edition.htm.

SIGN MAINTENANCE

School bus signs will be removed from CDOT ROW after the time requested is met as provided on the Sign Request Form. It is the responsibility of the local school district or designated service provider to report any change in school bus transportation operations on state highways to CDOT.

For the purpose of this section a change in school bus transportation operations shall mean:

The school bus stop or turn location is no longer in-use, or was relocated, or the time requested for the existing school bus signage has changed.

See Appendix C for CDOT Region contact information.

TRAFFIC SAFETY STRATEGIES

Roadway conditions and safety considerations vary across the state for school bus stop locations and turn locations. The local board of education or schools governing body should follow safety procedures for selecting school bus stop locations specific to their area of operation.

School bus stop location safety procedures should consider the following roadway safety strategies, but not limited to:

- Schedule and route planning for East-West sun glare times that impacts roadway user visibility.
- School bus stop location inspections to document roadway and environmental conditions.
 - Roadway conditions may include operational speed limits, roadway damage (i.e. potholes, pavement drop-offs), amount of motorist access points, volume of traffic, roadway user behavior, vertical and horizontal roadway geometry, and available lateral clearance.
 - Environmental conditions may include flood plain mapping, potential water hazards, the need for landscaping, seasonal snowplowing operations, wildlife activity, local business activity, and potential student access points.
- School bus routes should be planned to minimize turn around locations on state highways and turn around locations shall be located off-state highways wherever possible.
- Small-Capacity Vehicles and Type A Multifunction Buses are exempt from color, lettering, 8-way lamps, and stop signal arm requirements. In this case, school bus stops shall be located off-state-highways wherever possible.
- School transportation vehicle operator safety hazard reports shall be tracked. History of safety hazards should warrant an engineering study to improve roadway safety. The most common engineering recommendation for school bus operations is to relocate to a more suitable location.

Appendix A: School Bus Definitions²

School transportation small-capacity vehicles, Type A Multifunction Buses, and School Buses (Types A, B, C, and D) may be used to transport students. Multifunction Buses Type B, C, D, and Motor Coach Buses shall not be used to transport students to and from school.³

School Bus means a passenger vehicle that is designed and used to carry more than 12 passengers in addition to the driver, and which the Secretary of Transportation determines is likely to be significantly used for the purpose of transporting pre-primary, primary, or secondary school students to or from school or an event related to school. School buses are specifically designed for maximum safety.

Type "A" School Bus is a conversion or body constructed utilizing a cutaway front- section vehicle with a left-side driver's door and a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 21,500 pounds or less.

Type "B" School Bus is a body constructed and installed upon a stripped chassis. Part of the engine is beneath and/or behind the windshield and beside the driver's seat. The service door is behind the front wheels.

Type "C" School Bus is constructed utilizing a chassis with a hood and fender assembly. This includes the cutaway truck chassis, including the cab, with or without a left-side driver door, and with a GVWR greater than 21,500 pounds. The service door is behind the front wheels.

Type "D" School Bus is constructed utilizing a stripped chassis, the engine may be behind the windshield and beside the driver's seat; or it may be at the rear of the bus, behind the rear wheels. The service door is ahead of the front wheels.

Small-Capacity Vehicle means a motor vehicle, which does not meet the requirements of Type A, B, C, or D school buses, designed for general purpose use. These vehicles (12 passengers including the driver or less) may be used to carry students to and from school, from school to school, or to school-related events, and shall meet or exceed all applicable rules and regulations.

Multifunction School Activity Bus (MFSAB) is a type of school bus that is required to meet all FMVSS regulations applicable to school buses, except those requiring the installation of traffic control devices.

²1 CCR 301-25 - Colorado Minimum Standards Governing School Transportation Vehicles

³1 CCR 301-26 - Colorado Rules for the Operation, Maintenance, and Inspection of School Transportation Vehicles

Appendix B: MUTCD Advance Placement Distances⁴

Table 2C-3. Guidelines for Advance Placement of Warning Signs

Posted or 85th- Percentile Speed	Advance Placement Distance ¹									
	Condition A: Speed reduction and lane changing in heavy traffic ²	Condition B: Deceleration to the listed advisory speed (mph) for the condition								
		0 ³	10 ⁴	20 ⁴	30 ⁴	40 ⁴	50 ⁴	60 ⁴	70 ⁴	80 ⁴
20 mph	225 ft	115 ft	N/A ⁵	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
25 mph	325 ft	155 ft	N/A ⁵	N/A ⁵	—	—	—	—	—	—
30 mph	460 ft	200 ft	N/A ⁵	N/A ⁵	—	—	—	—	—	—
35 mph	565 ft	250 ft	N/A ⁵	N/A ⁵	N/A ⁵	—	—	—	—	—
40 mph	670 ft	305 ft	100 ft ⁶	100 ft ⁶	N/A ⁵	—	—	—	—	—
45 mph	775 ft	360 ft	125 ft	100 ft ⁶	100 ft ⁶	N/A ⁵	—	—	—	—
50 mph	885 ft	425 ft	200 ft	175 ft	125 ft	100 ft ⁶	—	—	—	—
55 mph	990 ft	495 ft	275 ft	225 ft	200 ft	125 ft	N/A ⁵	—	—	—
60 mph	1,100 ft	570 ft	350 ft	325 ft	275 ft	200 ft	100 ft ⁶	—	—	—
65 mph	1,200 ft	645 ft	450 ft	400 ft	350 ft	275 ft	200 ft	100 ft ⁶	—	—
70 mph	1,250 ft	730 ft	525 ft	500 ft	450 ft	375 ft	275 ft	150 ft	—	—
75 mph	1,350 ft	820 ft	625 ft	600 ft	550 ft	475 ft	375 ft	250 ft	100 ft ⁶	—
80 mph	1,475 ft	910 ft	725 ft	700 ft	625 ft	550 ft	450 ft	350 ft	200 ft	—
85 mph	1,600 ft	1,010 ft	825 ft	800 ft	750 ft	675 ft	575 ft	450 ft	300 ft	150 ft

¹ The distances are adjusted for a sign legibility distance of 180 feet for Condition A. The distances for Condition B (with the exception of the potential stop condition) have been adjusted for a sign legibility distance of 250 feet, which is appropriate for an alignment warning symbol sign. For Conditions A and B, warning signs with less than 6-inch legend or more than four words, a minimum of 100 feet should be added to the advance placement distance to provide adequate legibility of the warning sign.

² Typical conditions are locations where the road user must use extra time to adjust speed and change lanes in heavy traffic because of a complex driving situation. Typical signs are Merge and Right Lane Ends. The distances are determined by providing the driver a PRT of 14.0 to 14.5 seconds for vehicle maneuvers (2018 AASHTO Policy, Table 3-3, Decision Sight Distance, Avoidance Maneuver E) and adjusted for a legibility distance of 180 feet for the appropriate sign.

³ Typical condition is the warning of a potential stop situation. Typical signs are Stop Ahead, Yield Ahead, Signal Ahead, and Intersection Warning signs. The distances are based on the 2018 AASHTO Policy, Table 3-1, Stopping Sight Distance, providing a PRT of 2.5 seconds, a deceleration rate of 11.2 feet/second².

⁴ Typical conditions are locations where the road user must decrease speed to maneuver through the warned condition. Typical signs are Turn, Curve, Reverse Turn, or Reverse Curve. The distance is determined by providing a 2.5 second PRT, a vehicle deceleration rate of 10 feet/second², and adjusted for a sign legibility distance of 250 feet.

⁵ No suggested distances are provided for these speeds, as the placement location is dependent on site conditions and other signing. An alignment warning sign may be placed anywhere from the point of curvature up to 100 feet in advance of the curve. However, the alignment warning sign should be installed in advance of the curve and at least 100 feet from any other signs.

⁶ The minimum advance placement distance is listed as 100 feet to provide adequate spacing between signs.

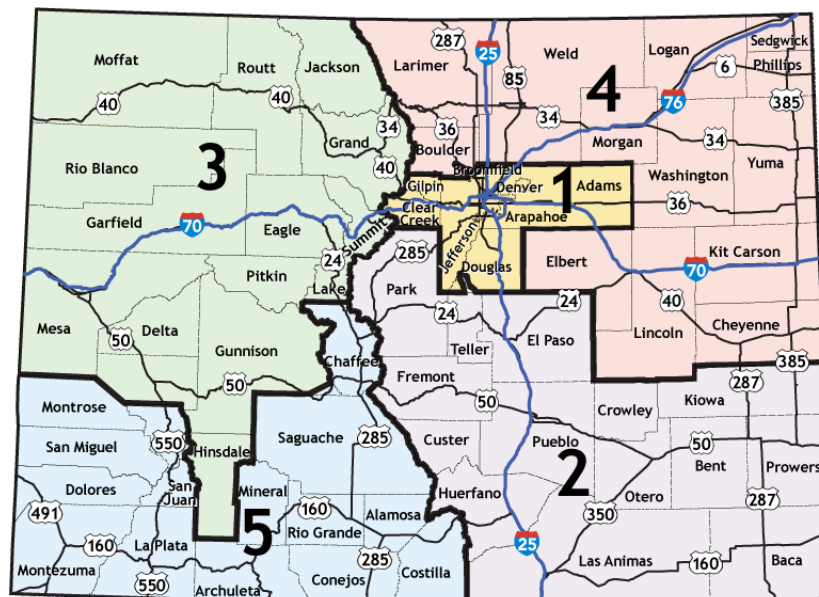
Note: Warning signs that advise road users about conditions that are not related to a specific location, such as Deer Crossing or SOFT SHOULDER, can be installed in an appropriate location, based on engineering judgment.

⁴ "Section 2C.04." In *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways*, 11th ed., 152, n.d. https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/kno_11th_Edition.htm.

Appendix C: Region Contact Information and Sign Request Form

School districts or designated service providers may request for School Bus Stop Ahead signage on CDOT ROW. External requests will not be considered. Forms shall be submitted to CDOT Region Traffic Units.

Region Traffic	Contact Info
Region 1	2829 W Howard Pl., 2nd Floor Denver, CO 80204 (303)365-7318
Region 2	5615 Willis Blvd Pueblo, CO 81008 (719)546-5411
Region 3	2328 G Road Grand Jct, CO 81505 (970)683-6275
Region 4	10601 10th Street Greeley, CO 80634 (970)350-2121
Region 5	3808 N. Main Ave 100 Durango, CO 81301 (970)880-0549



CDOT's SCHOOL BUS SIGN REQUEST FORM

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) may install School Bus signage in locations determined necessary by engineering judgement. This sign request form must be submitted by a local school district representative. Form submissions shall be submitted to Regional CDOT Traffic Units. The final determination to install school bus stop signage lies with the CDOT Region Traffic Engineer.

Local School District Representative Contact Information

Name: _____ Email: _____ Phone Number: _____

Location Description

County/City: _____ State Hwy: _____ Mile Post: _____

Please provide a Google Maps location: _____

Site Description

To be considered for school bus signage, there must be limited sight distance at the proposed signing location. Does the school bus stop or turn location have limited sight distance for road users?

YES

NO

UNSURE

Sign Request

Please indicate the desired sign(s) and provide the duration of time necessary for the sign to stay installed:



Duration of Time (Month/Year – Month/Year): _____ 10 years maximum

Note: Existing school bus signage will be removed by CDOT once the duration of time necessary is met. CDOT Region Traffic Units shall be notified when school bus or turn locations are relocated, or no longer in-use, or the duration of time has changed for the sign to stay installed.

Signature Section

Please provide your signature certifying that you have read and understand this form and have authorization from the school district to apply for school bus signage on their behalf. You are also certifying that you have read and understand the CDOT School Bus Sign Guide to the best of your knowledge.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

This page was left blank intentionally.