6. WARNING SIGNS

CHAPTER 6

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Chapter 6 Warning Signs

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Chapter 6 Warning Signs

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 Warning signs are used to alert drivers to danger or potential danger ahead. They indicate a need for extra caution and may require a consequent manoeuvre or a reduction in speed.

6.1.2 Most warning signs are diamond in shape with a black border encompassing a black symbol on a yellow background. The black symbol is usually a pictorial representation of the hazard. Supplementary plates showing a word or phrase can occasionally be mounted either separately or combined with the sign on a common backing plate underneath. Text should be bilingual.

6.1.3 Warning signs are prescribed in three sizes. The larger sizes are for use on the higher speed roads and should be sited at greater distances in advance of hazards. This should allow sufficient time for the warning message to be absorbed and necessary manoeuvres to be completed before the hazard is met. The standard dimensions of warning signs are illustrated in Figure 6.1.

6.1.4 There must always be a distance clear of obstructions in advance of a sign. This is known as the clear visibility distance and varies according to the speed of the traffic. Table 6.1 summarises all the available sign sizes and gives the appropriate siting distance and clear visibility distance for each category of road. The sizes of supplementary plates should be determined by choosing the appropriate 'x'-height size of lettering which is also indicated in Table 6.1. The text should be arranged using the same tiles that are used for directional informatory signs.

6.1.5 Where the geometry of the road dictates it, opposite hand versions of the signs may be used.

6.1.6 The following sections of this chapter deal with the types of warning signs and describe their conditions of use. The use of black on orange warning signs in connection with road works is described in Chapter 8 of this manual.

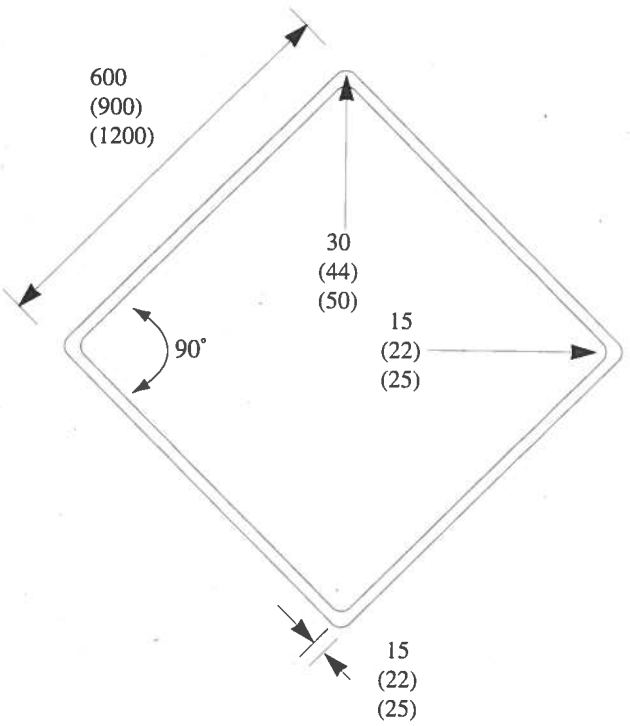

Figure 6.1 Standard Dimensions of Warning Signs.

Table 6.1 - Sizes of Warning Signs and Their Siting Details

85%ile Approach Speeds of Private Cars (Mph)	(Km/h)	Type of Road	Dimension of Side (mm)	Siting Distance of Sign From Hazard (m)	Recommended Clear Visibility Distance of Signs (m)	Recommended 'x' -height for Supplementary Plates (mm)
<30	<50	Urban & Rural Single Carriageway Roads	600 (900)	50-100	60	60
30-50	50-65	Urban Motorways & Urban Dual Carriageways	900	100-200	75	75
>50	>65	Rural Motorways & Rural Dual Carriageways	1200	200-300	100	100

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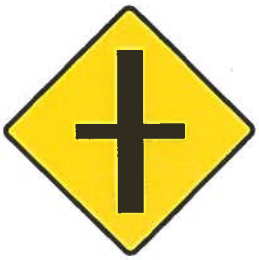

Figure 6.2
Crossroads.

6.2 Junction Ahead

6.2.1 These signs provide advance warning of a junction and illustrate the priority route at the junction by use of varying widths of the road symbol arms.

6.2.2 "Junction Ahead" warning signs can be categorised into three groups showing:

(i) a junction ahead with a road of less importance;
(ii) a junction ahead with a road of equal importance; and
(iii) a junction ahead with a road of greater importance.

The width of the junction arms should be 1/12th of the sign side for roads of lesser importance, 1/9th for roads of equal importance and 1/6th for roads of greater importance.

Figure 6.3
Side Road.

Junctions With Roads of Less Importance

6.2.3 The roads of less importance on these signs are indicated by arms of lesser widths. The five signs shown in Figures 6.2 to 6.6 are those available for use.

Figure 6.4
T - Junction.

6.2.4 The sign illustrated in Figure 6.6 should only be used where the distance between two consecutive junctions does not exceed 60 metres. Otherwise two versions of the sign shown in Figure 6.3 should be used (one of which should be reversed).

Figure 6.5
Y - Junction.

Figure 6.6
Staggered Crossroads.

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Junctions with Roads of Equal Importance

6.2.5 In the interest of safety it should be the policy of road authorities to eliminate the designation of junctions with roads of equal importance. New road junctions should always have one road designated as the major route.

6.2.6 Junctions with roads of equal importance can be indicated by signs shown in Figures 6.7 to 6.11. These show the same junction layouts as the signs in Figures 6.2 to 6.6 except that all route symbols have equal width.

6.2.7 The "Staggered Crossroads Ahead" sign shown in Figure 6.10 should be used where consecutive junctions are within 60 metres of each other.

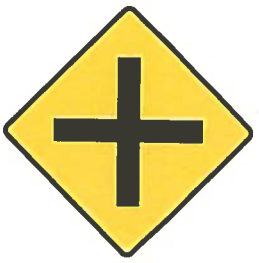

Figure 6.7
Crossroads.

Figure 6.8
Side Road.

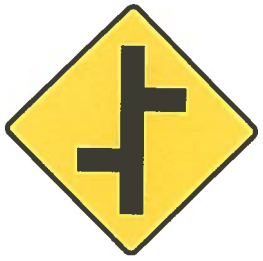

Figure 6.10
Staggered Crossroads

Figure 6.11
Y - Junction

Figure 6.9
T - Junction

Figure 6.12
Crossroads.

Figure 6.13
T - Junction.

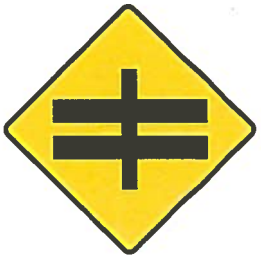

Figure 6.14
Crossroads With Dual Carriageway.

Figure 6.15
T - Junction With Dual Carriageway.

Junctions with Roads of Greater Importance

6.2.8 Figures 6.12 to 6.15 show the signs that are permitted for use on roads approaching a junction with a road of greater importance. Figures 6.12 and 6.13 show junction layouts where the road of greater importance is a single carriageway.

6.2.9 Dual carriageway junctions are represented by the signs in Figures 6.14 to 6.15.

6.2.10 All of the "Junction Ahead" signs described above give advance warning of a major road ahead which is marked at the junction either by a STOP sign or YIELD sign. These signs are described in Chapter 5.

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6.3 Merging Traffic

6.3.1 Figure 6.16 illustrates the warning sign used to indicate merging traffic. It gives warning where two physically separated streams of traffic proceeding in the same direction join the same undivided section of the carriageway.

Figure 6.16
Merging Traffic

6.3.2 This sign should not be used where there is no need for either traffic stream to concede priority (e.g. where an additional lane is picked up from the junction). When used, the sign should not obstruct the driver's view of vehicles entering the motorway or dual carriageway.

6.3.3 When traffic merges to join the same section of carriageway and then diverges shortly afterwards the sign shown in Figure 6.17 should be used.

Figure 6.17
Merging/Diverging Traffic

Figure 6.18
Roundabout Ahead

6.4 Roundabouts

6.4.1 The sign presented in Figure 6.18 should be used to indicate that there is a roundabout ahead.

6.4.2 On dual carriageways, two roundabout warning signs should be used in addition to the map-type sign. One should be sited on the central reserve and the other on the verge.

6.4.3 The siting of this sign should be in accordance with the recommendations contained in Table 6.1.

Figure 6.19
Mini-Roundabout Ahead

6.4.4 The roundabout warning sign should only be used for 'true' roundabouts. This excludes advance warning of one way working round a triangular or "Y" junction or at the entry to a large one-way system.

6.4.5 The sign shown in Figure 6.19 should be used to indicate a mini-roundabout.

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6.5 Bends and Corners

6.5.1 There are four signs prescribed to indicate corners or bends ahead and they are shown in Figures 6.20 to 6.23. Generally corners are much more extreme changes of direction than bends. Corners will require a greater reduction in speed if the road user is to negotiate them safely. They will also provide a smaller distance of forward visibility for drivers than bends.

Figure 6.20
Dangerous Corner Ahead.

6.5.2 All of the signs should be used sparingly and only where the driver will genuinely experience difficulty in negotiating the corner or bend without slowing down.

6.5.3 The symbols should indicate whether the change of direction is to the left or right. Each of the signs therefore has one permitted variant by reversing the symbols as appropriate.

Figure 6.21
Dangerous Bend Ahead

6.5.4 The degree of danger at a corner or bend varies with four factors:

(i) the speed of approach;
(ii) the radius of curvature;
(iii) the super elevation;
(iv) the skid resistance of the road surface;
(v) forward visibility.

Figure 6.22
Series of Dangerous Corners Ahead.

6.5.5 The distinction between a bend and a corner is a matter for the technical judgement of the roads authority.

6.5.6 The signs illustrated in Figures 6.22 and 6.23 should only be used where corners or bends of similar severity follow in close proximity.

Figure 6.23
Series of Dangerous BendsAhead

6.5.7 The black on white distance plates shown in Figure 6.24 is prescribed for use with both signs where roads are hazardous for longer distances. If a supplementary plate is provided it should not be necessary to sign individual corners or bends occurring within the distance stipulated.

6.5.8 Distances below 1km should be indicated in metres. Distances greater than this should be indicated in kilometres.

Figure 6.24
Distance Plates.

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6.6 Sharp Change of Direction

6.6.1 The "Sharp Change of Direction" sign or Chevron shown in Figure 6.25 should be used:

(i) on all roundabouts to face traffic on all approaches. The chevron is used at roundabouts with the turn left sign. Its use in this respect is illustrated in Chapter 5;

(ii) elsewhere to supplement a bend or corner sign which on its own does not provide sufficient warning;

(iii) at a rural T-junction where the major road turns through an angle of 90° or more;

(iv) at road works as a temporary measure to aid delineation of the site (see Chapter 8).

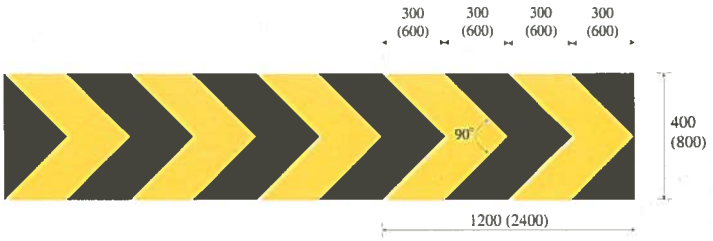

Figure 6.25
Sharp Change of Direction

Note:
Yellow chevron on black background

6.6.2 This sign should not be used to indicate a narrowing of the road.

6.6.3 Widths of 400mm and 800mm are prescribed for this sign. The minimum length of the 400mm sign is 1200mm which may be increased by increments of 600mm as required. The 800mm sign has a minimum length of 2400mm increased by increments of 1200mm as appropriate. The larger size should generally be used for high speed approaches.

6.6.4 The normal mounting height should be 1 metre to the lower edge of the sign.

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6.7 Road Narrows

6.7.1 The signs available for indicating road narrows on one side or both sides are shown in Figures 6.26 and 6.27 respectively. The signs can also be used with an orange background for use at roadworks (See Chapter 8).

6.7.2 The sign should be erected where a reduction in carriageway width presents a danger to road users.

Figure 6.26
Road Narrows On One Side

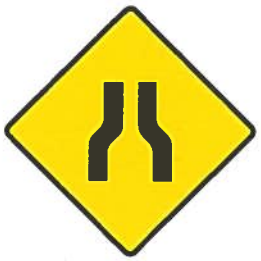

Figure 6.27
Road Narrows On Both Sides

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Figure 6.28
Road Divides

Figure 6.29
Dual Carriageway Ends.

Figure 6.30
Two Way Traffic.

6.8 Dual Carriageway

6.8.1 The "Road Divides" sign shown in Figure 6.28 is used at the beginning of a dual carriageway to indicate a central reservation ahead.

6.8.2 The sign shown in Figure 6.29 is used to indicate the end of a dual carriageway. The sign may be accompanied by a plate showing the distance to the merge.

6.8.3 The sign shown in Figure 6.30 should be erected at or as near as possible to the beginning of the two-way traffic and it may be repeated after 100 metres.

6.8.4 In rural areas or where the road has a high speed limit, more frequent signs are needed. The sign shown in Figure 6.29 should be erected on both sides of the carriageway at distances of 400 and 200 metres from the end of the dual carriageway.

6.8.5 Where dual carriageways end at roundabouts, "Dual Carriageway Ends" signs (Figure 6.29) should be sited on both sides of the carriageway 100 metres before the roundabout. The "Two-Way Traffic" (Figure 6.30) sign should then be erected immediately after the entry to the two-way carriageway.

6.8.6 An example of signing the transition between a single and dual carriageway is shown on fig. 6.31.

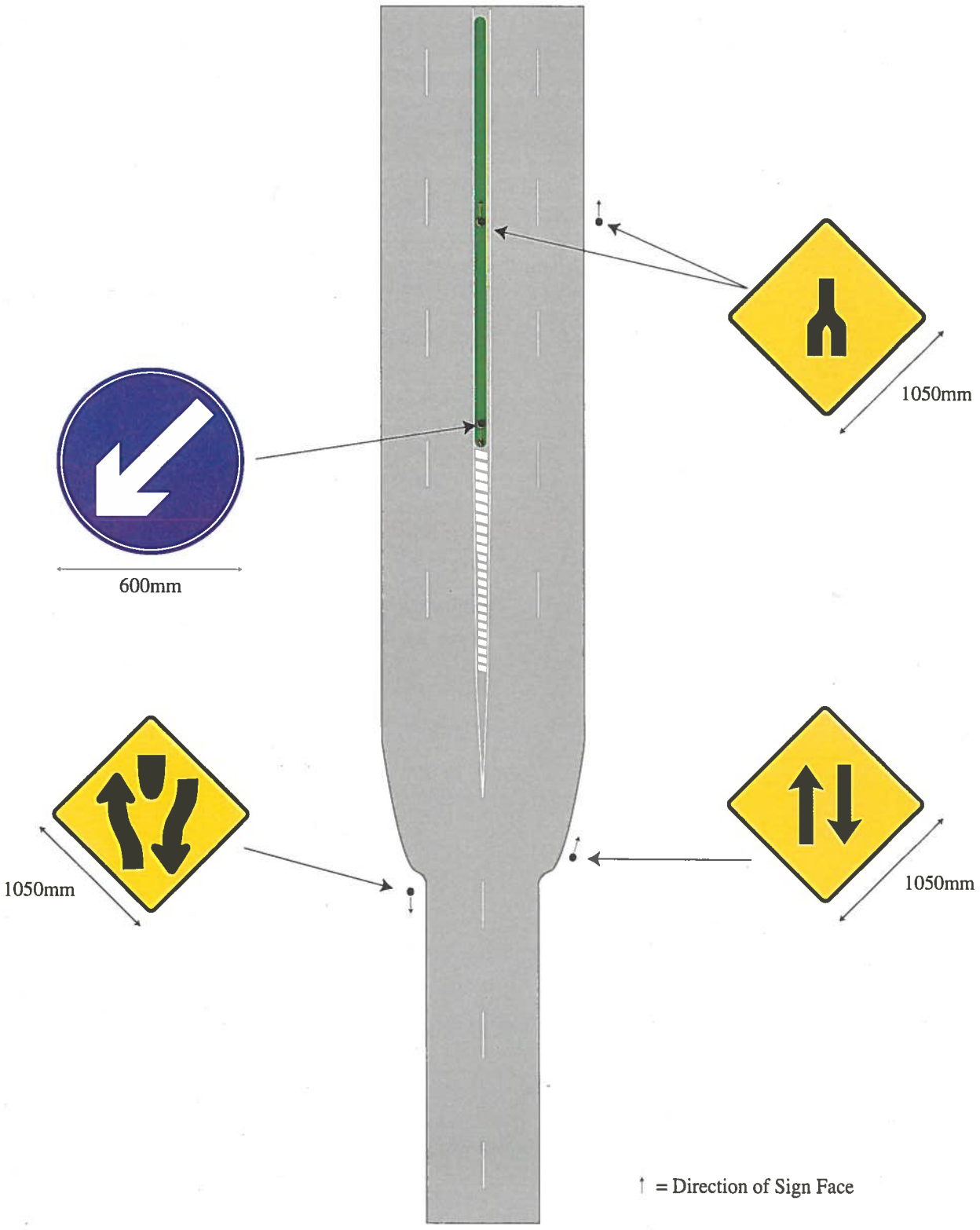

Figure 6.31
Dual Carriageway Signing.

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Figure 6.32
Steep Descent Ahead.

Figure 6.33
Steep Ascent Ahead.

6.9 Steep Hill

6.9.1 The signs prescribed for indicating steep gradients are shown in Figure 6.32 (Descent) and Figure 6.33 (Ascent).

6.9.2 The descent sign shown in Figure 6.32 should be used where the gradient is greater than 5% or 1 in 20. The sign can be repeated on the hill where the gradient steepens noticeably.

6.9.3 On a fairly long descent there may be portions that are steep and others that are appreciably less so and below the 5% or 1 in 20 criteria. In this case it may be advisable to treat the steeper portions as separate hills.

6.9.4 The ascent sign shown in Figure 6.33 should only be used where the gradient exceeds 10% or 1 in 10.

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6.10 Restricted Headroom

6.10.1 The sign illustrated in Figure 6.34 should be used to indicate restricted headroom over the carriageway.

Figure 6.34
Restricted Headroom

6.10.2 This sign should also be mounted, where possible, on the structure itself to give additional warning.In the case of rail over road bridges this sign is fixed by Iarnrod Eireann. If the headroom varies across the width of the carriageway (e.g. at an arch bridge) the sign should be supplemented by the "goal post" marking shown in Figure 6.35, indicating the width over which the clearance height is available.

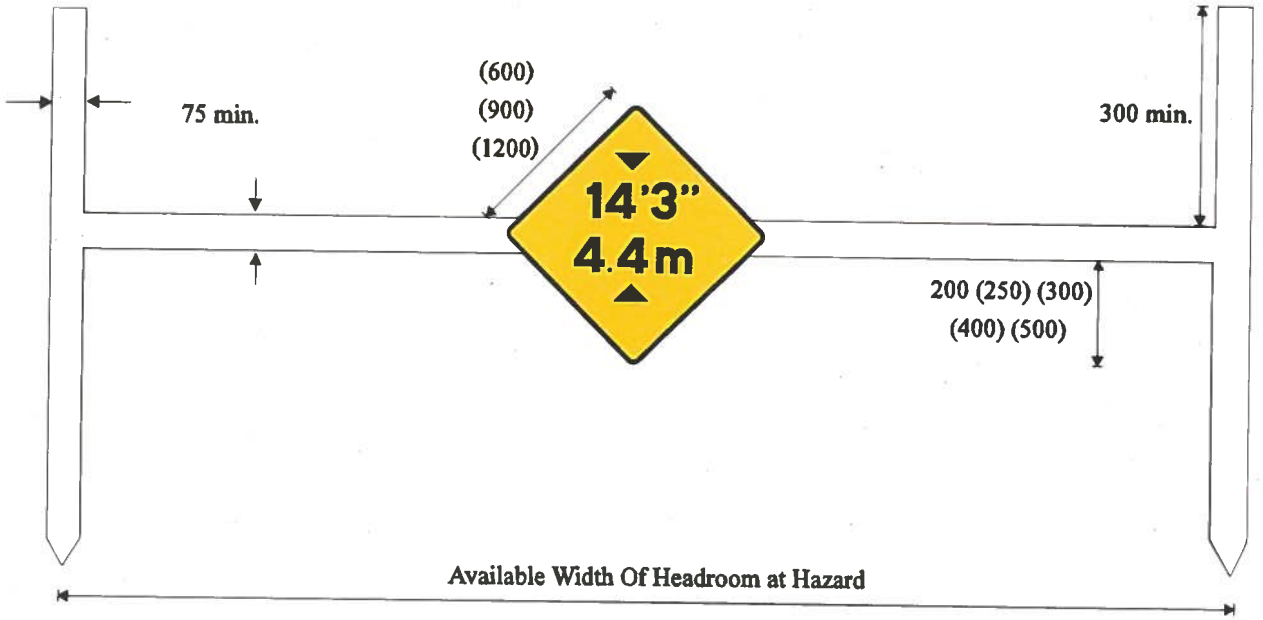

Figure 6.35
"Goal Post" Marking At Hazard.

6.10.3 In the case of rail overbridges, the clearance height should be agreed with the Iarnrod Eireann area engineer.

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Figure 6.36
Overhead Electric Cables.

6.11 Overhead Electric Cables

6.11.1 The sign warning of overhead electric cables is presented in Figure 6.36. It must always be accompanied by the supplementary plate shown in Figure 6.37 which should have black text on a white background.

6.11.2 These signs are normally only associated with the overhead electrified railway cables of the Dublin Area Rapid Transit System (DART) and they should be used in advance of all level crossings on these lines.

6.11.3 The measurement appearing on the supplementary plate should be agreed with Iarnród Éireann.

Figure 6.37
Safe Height Plate.

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6.12 Level Crossings

6.12.1 Signs warning of level crossings ahead are shown in figures 6.38 to 6.40.

6.12.2 The sign shown in figure 6.38 may also be associated with level crossings operated by "Lights and Bells" only.

6.12.3 Automatic level crossings other than "Lights and Bells" crossing are equipped with barriers (half barriers or full barriers) and lights. The signs associated with such crossings are show in figures 6.40 to 6.42.

6.12.4 The recommended layout for road markings at an automatic half-barrier crossing is illustrated in chapter 7

6.12.5 Before undertaking any works or alteration to sign layouts, consultation should take place with the relevant railway authority, (generally Iarnrod Eireann). Reference should also be made to the document "Requirements and Guidelines for the Provision of Automatically Operated Half-Barriers at Railway Level Crossings" issued by the Department of Transport, Energy and Communications.

6.12.6 The spacing and distance of signs from the level crossings is indicated in Figure 6.43. Where local site conditions preclude full compliance with these guidelines, departures may be acceptable provided that safety standards are not impaired.

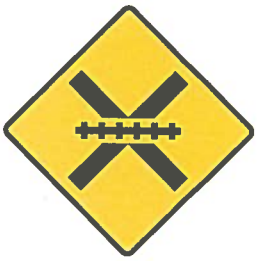

Figure 6.38
Level Crossing Ahead, Unguarded By Gates Or Lifting Barriers.

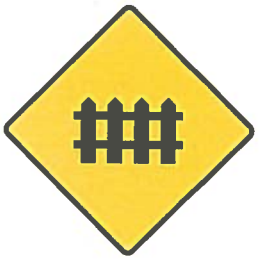

Figure 6.39
Level Crossing Ahead, Guarded By Gates Or Lifting Barriers.

Figure 6.40
Level Crossing Ahead
With Lights And Barriers.

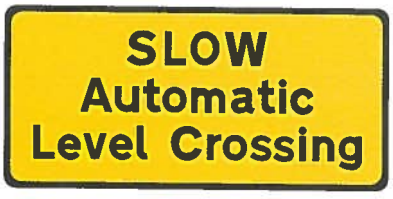

Figure 6.42
Slow Automatic Level Crossing.

Figure 6.41
Stop When Red Lights Show.

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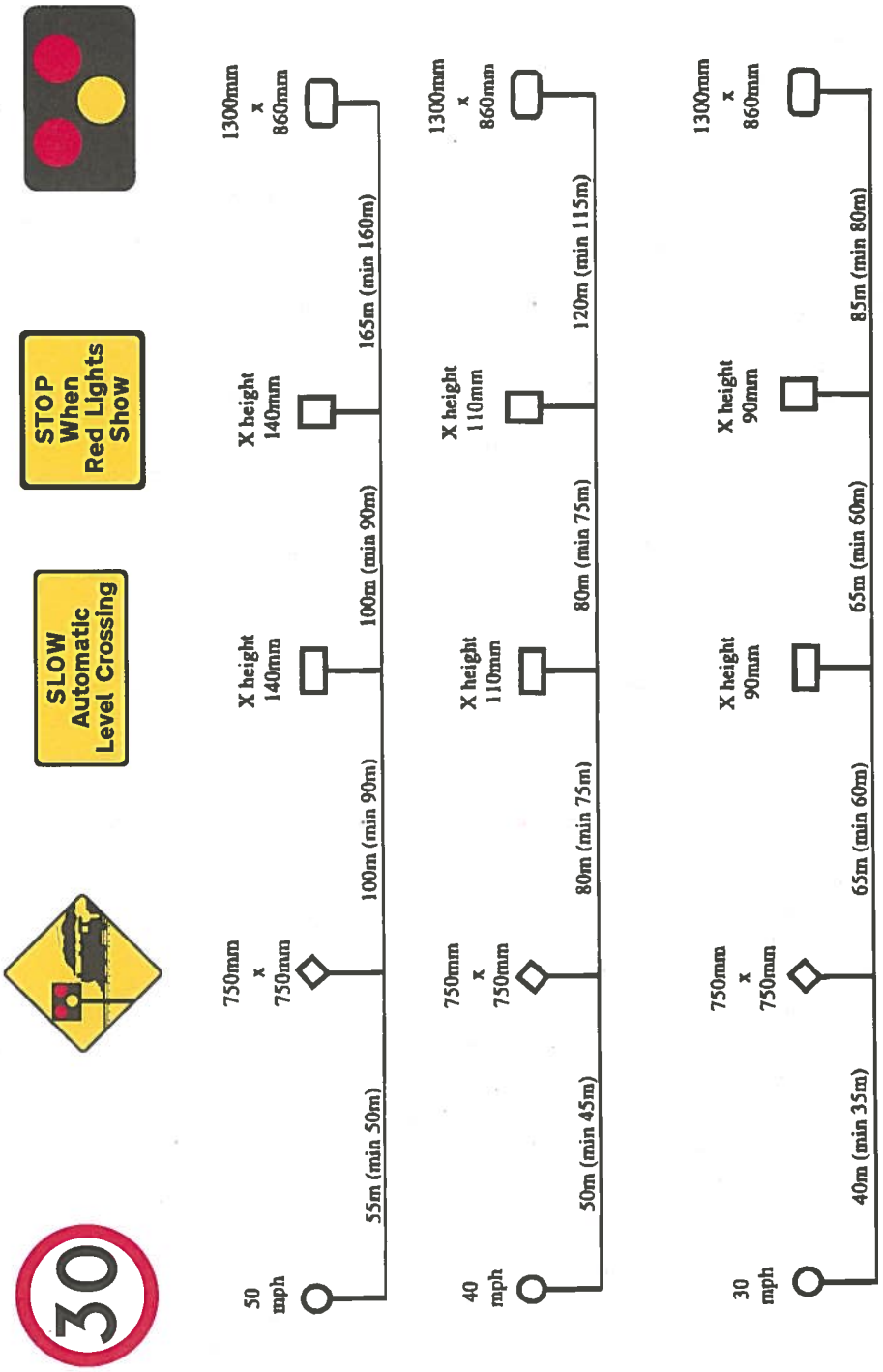

Figure 6.43
Spacing And Distance Of Signs From Level Crossing

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6.13 Rises or Depressions

6.13.1 Local sharp rises or depressions in the road are indicated by three types of warning signs which are shown in Figures 6.44, 6.45 and 6.46.

6.13.2 The sign shown in Figure 6.46 should be used to indicate a series of sharp rises and depressions or an uneven road. It is also used to indicate dangers arising from irregularities in the road surface which would impair the control of vehicles at their normal speed.

Figure 6.44
Sharp Rise Ahead
e.g. Hump-Back Bridge.

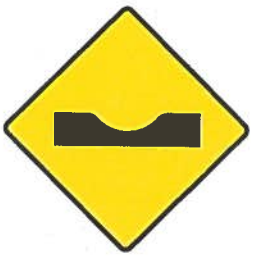

Figure 6.45
Sharp Depression Ahead.

Figure 6.46
Series Of Bumps
Or Hollows Ahead.

Figure 6.47
Slippery Road Ahead.

6.14 Slippery Road

6.14.1 The "Slippery Road Ahead" sign displayed in Figure 6.47 is intended for use where the danger of vehicles skidding is higher than normal.

6.14.2 Where slippery conditions occur at road works sites this sign should have an orange background. Its use in this situation is fully described in Chapter 8.

6.15 River, Canal or Quayside

Figure 6.48
Unprotected Quay, Canal or River Ahead.

6.15.1 Wherever a public road approaches a water hazard such as an unprotected river, canal or quayside, the sign shown in Figure 6.48 should be used.

6.16 Traffic Signals

Figure 6.49
Traffic Signals Ahead.

6.16.1 The "Traffic Signals Ahead" sign is shown in Figure 6.49. It is recommended that the reader refers to Chapter 9, (Traffic Signals) when contemplating the use of the "Traffic Signals Ahead" sign.

6.16.2 The sign should always be used on approaches to signals on roads with a speed limit of 50mph or more. It is not necessary on roads restricted to 30mph or less unless the visibility of the first primary signal is less than 45 metres. The sign should not be used where visibility is only impaired by waiting vehicles, as such can be overcome by regulation.

6.16.3 This sign should have an orange background where it is used to indicate temporary traffic signals which have been installed to control traffic at roadworks. Further details of its use in this context are provided in Chapter 8.

6.17 Schools and Children

6.17.1 There are three signs that are prescribed to give advance warning of the presence of schools and children;

(i) "School Ahead" sign shown in Figure 6.50;
(ii) "School Children Crossing Ahead" sign shown in Figure 6.51;
(iii) Children Crossing (in Residential areas) sign shown in Figure 6.52.

Figure 6.50
School Ahead.

6.17.2 The "School Ahead" sign should be used to indicate that there is a school, children's playground or other place frequented by large numbers of children.

6.17.3 Alternatively the sign can be used with twin amber lights mounted directly below as shown in Figure 6.51. This should be done either where an adult or junior school warden service operates or where prevailing circumstances such as vehicle speeds or highway alignment constitute a significant danger to children crossing .

Figure 6.51
School Children
Crossing Ahead.

6.17.4 The twin flashing amber lights should be on a black background. The lenses should have a minimum diameter of 200mm and flash at a rate of between 60-80 flashes a minute. Flashes in each amber light should overlap so that one light is always showing when in operation.

6.17.5 Where an adult or junior school warden service is in operation, the flashing lights sequence should only be activated during the warden's relevant duty periods. In other cases the lights should only be activated for the minimum periods necessary to cover child crossing movements during those times when the children are entering or leaving the school.

6.17.6 Where an adult or junior warden service operates, activating and switching off the flashing light unit will be the responsibility of the adult warden or a designated member of the junior school warden team. In all cases the local authority should make appropriate arrangements to ensure that the light unit operation is managed by a responsible person.

Figure 6.52
Children Crossing
(in residential areas).

6.17.7 Either of the signs shown in Figures 6.50 and 6.51 should be used in the vicinity of schools but not both simultaneously. Both signs should be sited in accordance with the distances given in Table 6.1. The "School Children Crossing" sign with flashing amber lights (Figure 6.51) should not be erected within 100 metres of traffic signals or pedestrian complexes where children may otherwise cross in safety.

6.17.8 The sign illustrated in Figure 6.52 should be used to alert road users to the danger of children crossing roads in residential areas rather than schools and their associated playgrounds. This sign will be accompanied by the plates illustrated.

6.17.9 The sign should only be provided at the entrances to roads of a primarily residential character with continuous housing frontage. Signs should be provided at the entrances to housing estates from main traffic routes.

6.18 Animals Crossing

6.18.1 The warning signs prescribed to indicate the possibility of animals crossing the road are:

(i) Accompanied Horses or Ponies (Figure 6.53);
(ii) Cattle or Farm Animals (Figure 6.54);
(iii) Sheep (Figure 6.55);
(iv) Deer or Wild Animals (Figure 6.56).

Figure 6.53
Accompanied Horses or Ponies.

6.18.2 The "Accompanied Horses or Ponies" sign (Figure 6.53) should only be used where traffic volumes exceed 300 vehicles per day and where at least 5 accompanied horses or ponies regularly cross or use the stretch of road in a day.

6.18.3 The cattle or farm animal sign (Figure 6.54) may be used at certain locations where livestock are brought across or likely to be encountered along stretches of road. The following should be considered before the provision of such a sign:

1. The location should be in regular use for the above purpose

2. There should be evidence of an accident record or the location should be considered hazardous.

3. The available sight distance should be less than that required for the 85 percentile speed.

Figure 6.54
Cattle or Farm Animals.

6.18.4 The sign depicting a sheep (Figure 6.55) may be used where sheep are likely to be found crossing or straying onto the road, e.g. commonage.

Figure 6.55
Sheep.

6.18.5 The sign depicting a deer (Figure 6.56) may be used where wild animals are likely to be encountered.

Figure 6.56
Deer or Wild Animals.

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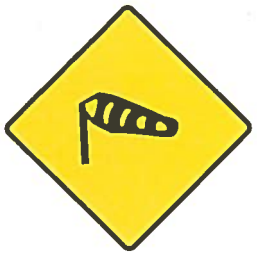

Figure 6.57
Crosswinds.

6.19 Crosswinds

6.19.1 The sign shown in Figure 6.57 should be used where crosswinds occur regularly and may cause road users to lose control of their vehicle. The sign can also be used when crosswinds constitute a risk of overturning high sided goods vehicles. Risk prone areas will include lengthy or elevated sections of viaducts spanning high sided valleys or in areas where no natural protection from crosswinds exists.

6.19.2 The "Crosswinds" sign can be supplemented by the plate shown in Figure 6.24 to indicate the length of road affected.

Figure 6.58
Pedestrian Crossing Ahead..

6.20 Pedestrians

6.20.1 The "Pedestrian Crossing Ahead" warning sign is illustrated in Figure 6.58 and should be used in connection with uncontrolled zebra crossings or at other pedestrian crossings where visibility of the crossing is impaired.

Figure 6.59
Tunnel Ahead.

6.21 Tunnel

6.21.1 The sign shown in figure 6.59 may be used in advance of a tunnel. Where the height varies across the width of the tunnel, the "goal-post" sign shown in figure 6.35 should be used.

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6.22 Risk of Falling or Fallen Rocks

6.22.1 The sign shown in Figure 6.60 should be used where there is a danger of rocks falling onto a stretch of road. A supplementary plate to show the distance of the stretch of road likely to be affected can be used (See Figure 6.24).

Figure 6.60
Danger of Falling Rocks.

6.22.2 As a permitted variant, the sign may be reversed if appropriate.

6.23 Low-Flying Aircraft

6.23.1 The "Low-Flying Aircraft" sign (Figure 6.61) is for use on roads skirting or in the vicinity of airfields. It is used to warn of low flying aircraft or sudden aircraft noise which may startle road users.

Figure 6.61
Low Flying Aircraft..

6.23.2 A supplementary plate (Figure 6.24) can be used with the sign to indicate the length of road affected.

6.24 Drive on left

6.24.1 The sign shown in figure 6.62 should be used at exits from ports and airports. It may also be used where hazards may exist on exits from long-stay tourist camps and resorts. The sign should be duplicated on the right-hand side of the road.

Figure 6.62
Drive on Left.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

6.25 Roadside Delineators

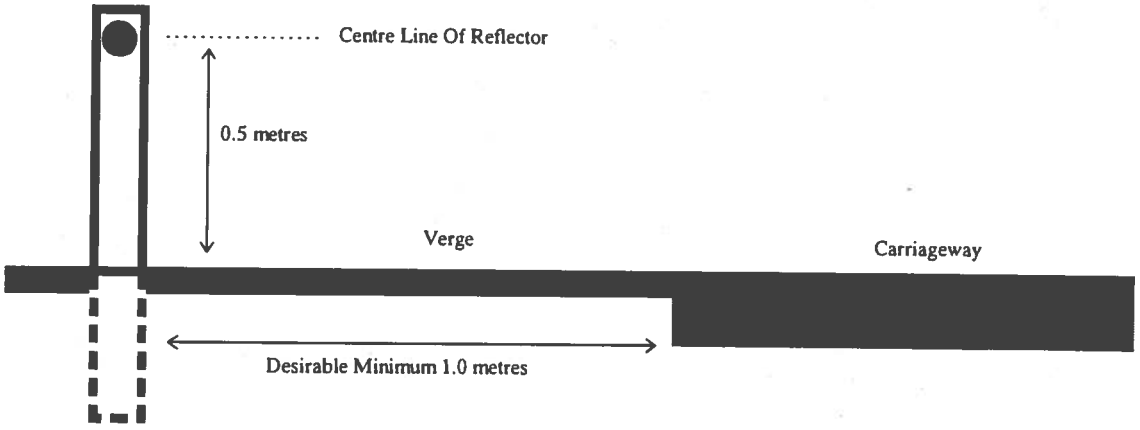
6.25.1 Two types of delineator are available, flexible and rigid. It is a matter for the road authority to determine which type should be used in terms of suitability and value for money.

6.25.2 All types of delineator should incorporate a 60mm diameter colour cube reflector of the colour specified.

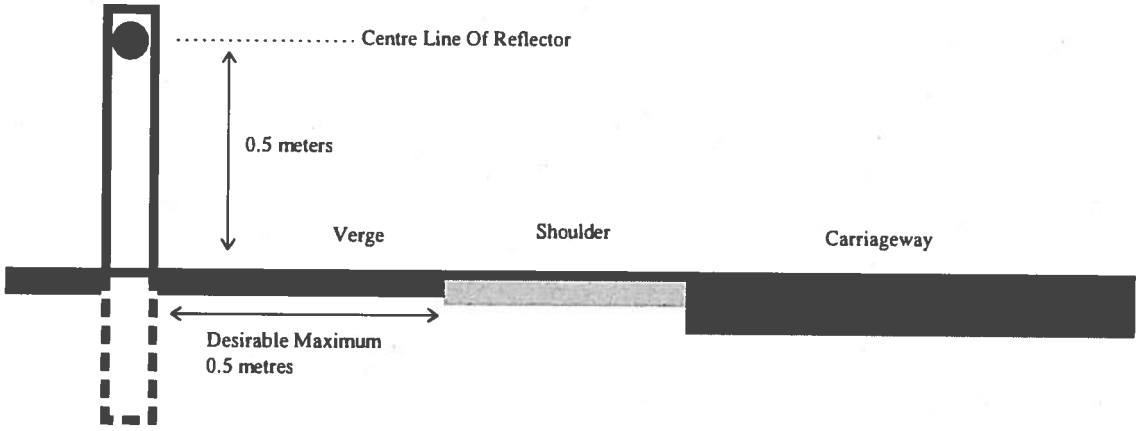
6.25.3 Placement should be as indicated in Figure 6.63. Where drainage trenches interfere with the recommended placement, the delineators may be placed on either side of the trench at the discretion of the engineer.

6.25.4 Delineators can be used to indicate the edge of the carriageway on embankments, mountain roads and other points where special danger exists. They should also be used to indicate the place where the carriageway suddenly narrows such as around obstructions near the kerb like a bridge parapet. In these cases the reflectors may be affixed to the structure rather than a separate post.

6.25.5 Details of location and colour of delineators used on road schemes are given in Chapter 7.



Road Without Shoulder



Road With Shoulder

Note: Posts should be placed at a constant distance from the carriageway in a smooth alignment.

Figure 6.63
Placement Of Roadside Delineators.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

6.26 Mounting Of Warning Signs

6.26.1 Warning signs in rural areas should normally be mounted 1000mm to 1500mm above the carriageway level. Where spray is excessive and likely to soil the sign, the higher mounting height should be used.

6.26.2 Where signs are erected above footways, a minimum height of 2100mm above the pavement is recommended. If supplementary plates are used then the mounting height should be measured to the bottom of the plate.

6.26.3 Plates should be separated from the sign or another plate by a distance equal to the 'x'- height of the lettering. Alternatively both may be combined on a grey backing plate with 3 stroke width clearance all round.

6.26.4 Further details on sign mounting are given in Chapter 10.

Mounting More Than One Sign On A Post

6.26.5 Figure 6.64 shows all the allowable combinations of signs and plates that can be mounted on a single post. Normally not more than two signs can be mounted together. The combination of the sign and its associated plate can be considered as one "sign" for this purpose.

6.26.6 Warning signs should not be mounted with STOP or YIELD regulatory signs. If mounted with other types of signs, warning signs should always appear on top.

6.26.7 In the event that assemblies of more than one warning sign are created, then the signs indicating hazards encountered first should be placed upper most.

6.26.8 No assemblies should exceed 3.75 metres above ground level. All proposed assemblies should be critically examined to ensure that the intended warning is clear.

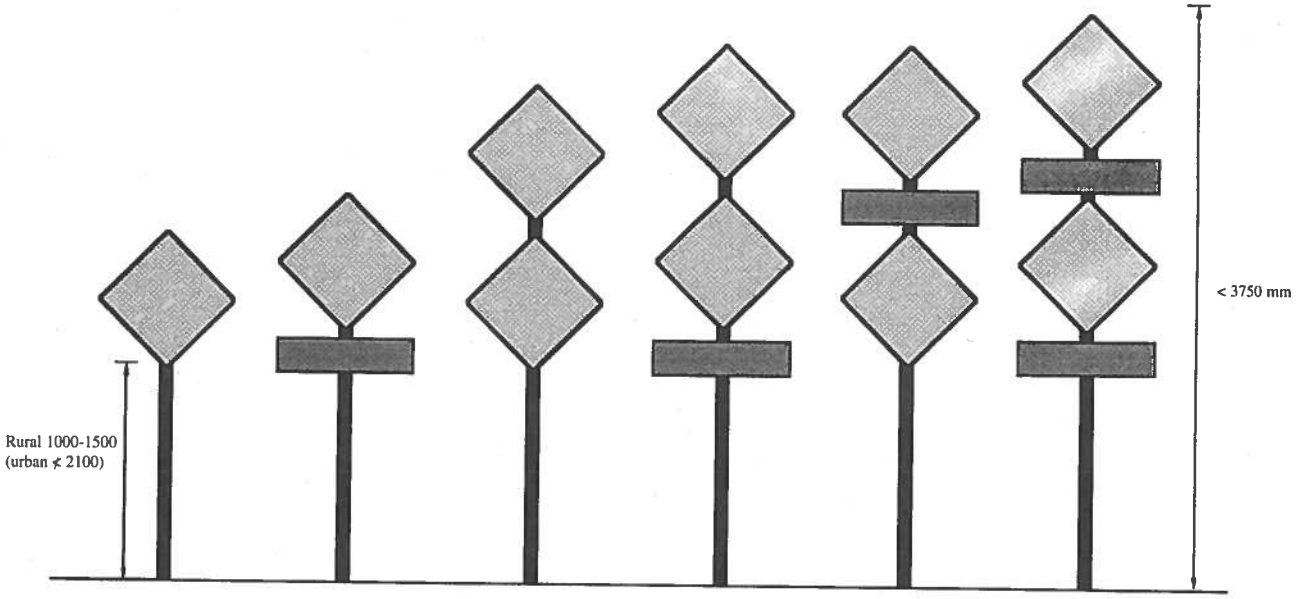


Figure 6.64 Assembly Combinations Of Warning Signs And Supplementary Plates.