

Traffic Advisory Leaflet 1/95
March 1995



Speed limit signs - a guide to good practice

Introduction

The 1994 Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions simplified the requirements for the placement of terminal and repeater signs used to indicate a speed limit, and introduced some new prescribed sizes. The intention was to give greater flexibility in the placement of signs. This would overcome the situation where signs placed marginally too far apart have had the effect of making the limit unenforceable. The 1994 Regulations thus specify simply that signs should be placed at regular intervals.

This leaflet sets out good practice on the placing of signs. It supersedes previous advice, and should be borne in mind when reviewing old signing arrangements. It is not retrospective.

Positioning Repeaters

For 30 mph lit roads, no repeaters are permitted under the regulations (Direction 10(2)(a)).

On lit roads subject to any other speed limit (other than 20mph speed limit zones), including the national speed limit, repeaters must be used. Table 1 gives recommended distances between such signs. (National speed limit signs are not required on motorways).

TABLE 1 - RECOMMENDED DISTANCES BETWEEN SIGNS

Type of road	Maximum distance between consecutive signs on the same side of the carriageway	Maximum distance between consecutive signs on alternate sides of the carriageway	Maximum distance between start/end of length of road required to be signed and first/last repeater
1. 20 mph speed limit zone - NO REPEATERS			
2. Lit 30 mph road (street lamps not more than 183 metres apart) (185 metres in Scotland) - NO REPEATERS			
3. Road more than 250 metres in length:- (i) on which the speed limit is less than 30 mph; or (ii) where there is a 30 mph speed limit, but a system of street lighting furnished by lamps placed not more than 183 metres apart (185 metres in Scotland) is not provided	400m	250m	200m
4. Road more than 350 metres in length:- (i) on which the maximum speed limit is 40 mph; (ii) on which a minimum speed limit is in force; or (iii) on which there is a system of street lighting furnished by means of lamps placed not more than 183 metres apart (185 metres in Scotland) and on which the national speed limit is in force	500m	350m	250m
5. Road more than 450 metres in length, on which a maximum speed limit of 50 mph is in force	700m	450m	350m
6. Road more than 500 metres in length on which the maximum speed limit is 60 mph	800m	500m	400m
7. Lit road more than 600 metres in length on which the national speed limit applies	900m	600m	450m

Recommended Sizes of Signs: Tables 2 and 3 indicate appropriate sizes for terminal speed limit signs placed on a continuous carriageway and at junctions. Table 4 offers advice on the sizes for repeater signs.

TABLE 2 - TERMINAL SIGNS

TYPE OF APPROACH ROAD	SPEED LIMIT ON APPROACH ROAD (higher limit) (mm)			
	40mph	50mph	60mph	70mph
Single carriageway or one-way road	600	600	750(600)	-
Dual carriageway up to 1km in length	600	750	750	900
Dual carriageway greater than 1km in length	750(600)	900(750)	90	1,200(900)
Motorways	-	1,200	1,200	1,200
Road works on motorways	-	1,200	1,500	1,500

NOTE: Where derestriction or higher speed limit signs are mounted back to back with lower speed limit signs, the overall appearance of the assembly will be improved if the larger of the suggested sizes is used for both. The alternative sizes shown in brackets may be used where the 85th percentile speed on the approach road is at least 10mph less than the legal speed limit.

TABLE 3 - TERMINAL SIGNS AT JUNCTIONS

TYPE OF APPROACH ROAD	TYPE OF JUNCTION	
	Priority and signal controlled	Free Flow (including merging lanes)
Single carriageway or one way road.	450	600
Dual carriageway	600	750
Motorway exit slip/on slip	750	900

NOTE: Where derestriction or higher speed limit signs are mounted back to back with lower speed limit signs, the overall appearance of the assembly will be improved if the larger of the suggested sizes is used for both.

TABLE 4 - REPEATER SIGNS

TYPE OF ROAD AND SPEED LIMIT	SIZE(mm)
All roads 30mph and 40mph	300
Single carriageway 50mph and National Speed Limit*	450
Dual carriageway or motorway 50mph	450
Dual carriageway 60mph and National Speed Limit*, or motorway 60mph	600
Road works on motorways 40mph	600
Road works on motorways 50mph	750

*National Speed Limit Signs

References: The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions, 1994. SI No. 1519, HMSO, £24-50p
Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

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