Chapter 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION
Intentionally blank
General Introduction

Although physically a separate publication, the Sign Designs and Markings Manual (SDMM), has also been incorporated by reference into the Traffic Engineering Manual (TEM) as Section 295-2. The SDMM, is intended to provide standard sign designs for the signs prescribed or provided for in the Ohio Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (OMUTCD) and the TEM. The OMUTCD and the TEM are both available on the ODOT website, and revisions of the TEM and this Manual are posted only on the ODOT website. The ODOT web address is provided on the back of the title page for this Manual.

These designs have been provided by ODOT for use by all traffic authorities, agencies, jurisdictions and persons involved with the fabrication, installation and maintenance of traffic signs on streets and highways in Ohio. If there are any questions about any of this material, please feel free to contact us. Contact information is provided on the back of the title page for this Manual.

The drawings in this Manual are presented in English units and are provided to promote uniformity in design throughout the State. OMUTCD Chapter 2A establishes the general standards and guidelines for the design and application of traffic control signs. Additional provisions for specific signs are addressed in other chapters of the OMUTCD.

An attempt has been made to provide uniformity of specific design details between two or more different types of signs having approximate sizes. Additionally, details for arrows and other items have been standardized as much as possible to facilitate fabrication of the signs and for national uniformity.

For word messages, although some of the older designs provide detail letter placement information, the newer drawings show only the overall length and placement of the characters. Only the Series 2000 Standard Alphabet spacing charts may be used to determine overall length. Spacing tables for this alphabet and general design information are provided in Appendix D. The spacing between individual character combinations can be adjusted visually to attain the most satisfying balance. Where spacing between individual letters has been reduced or increased, the dimension is noted by an asterisk on the plate dimension detail. Any such change represents a deviation from the full spacing as suggested in the spacing charts provided in Appendix D.

For symbol messages, the overall height and width of the symbol and its placement on the sign is shown. The exact detail of the symbol is shown on a grid. Symbols and symbol drawings are contained in Appendix A. Any symbol may be enlarged to any size if done proportionally. The grid is provided as a reference to ensure proportional relationships remain correct.

The SDMM prescribes design details for various sign sizes to reflect the specified sizes in the OMUTCD, based generally on three types of highway facilities, freeways, expressways and conventional roads, and the following categories:

Minimum – For use on low-speed roadways where the reduced legend size would be adequate for sign legibility.

Low-Volume Road – A roadway outside built-up areas of cities, towns and communities that is either paved or unpaved having a traffic volume less than 400 vehicles AADT.

Special Purpose Road – A low-volume, low-speed, road that serves recreational or resource development activities or that provides local access.

Bicycle Facilities – Facilities provided for bicycle usage defined as either in the roadway or a shared-use path that is physically separated from motorized traffic.
Oversized – The oversized sign size and larger freeway and expressway signs may be used for those applications where speed, volume or other factors result in conditions where increased emphasis, improved recognition or increased legibility would be desirable.

Sign size tables are found in the OMUTCD. The decision to use the most appropriate sign size is the responsibility of the agency or official having authority over the traffic facility.

Additional design information has been provided in Appendix B, and Appendix C details Ohio’s Freeway and Expressway Guide Sign Design Method.