



Illinois Department of Transportation

2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Springfield, Illinois / 62764

April 16, 2012

CIRCULAR LETTER 2012-09

STREET NAME SIGNS

COUNTY ENGINEERS/SUPERINTENDENTS OF HIGHWAYS
MUNICIPAL ENGINEERS/DIRECTORS OF PUBLIC WORKS/MAYORS
CONSULTING ENGINEERS

Due to changes in the 2009 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) to the requirements for Street Name (D3-1) signs, the central Bureau of Local Roads and Streets has received numerous questions. Following is a summary:

- Installation - MUTCD Section 2D.43 paragraph 01 recommends that "Street Name (D3-1 or D3-1a) signs should be installed in urban areas at all intersections...and should be installed in rural areas to identify important roads that are not otherwise signed." The department requires rural reference signs to follow the Street Name (D3-1) sign requirements if installed.
- Size of Sign - MUTCD Section 2D.04 paragraph 01 requires that "the sizes of conventional road guide signs that have standardized designs shall be as shown in Table 2D-1." For 1 line street name signs, the height required is 12" for conventional roads with a minimum height of 8" allowed based on engineering judgment. The length varies based on the name of the street. This requirement applies immediately to any new Street Name signs. However, there is no deadline for existing Street Name signs to meet this requirement.
- Mixed Case Lettering - MUTCD Section 2D.43 paragraph 03 requires that street name signs "shall be composed of a combination of lower-case letters with initial upper-case letters." This requirement applies immediately to any new Street Name signs. However, there is no deadline for existing Street Name signs to meet this requirement.
- Letter Height - MUTCD Table 2D-2 provides for the recommended minimum letter height based on type of mounting, type of street or highway, and speed limit. The MUTCD recommends a 6" letter height for roads with speed limits of 40 mph or less with an option of a 4" letter height for streets with speed limits of 25 mph or less. Agencies should decide immediately whether to use the recommended letter height or to use engineering study or judgment to decide that a smaller letter height is acceptable. The MUTCD also recommends for multilane roads greater than 40 mph that 8" letter heights be used for post mounted street name signs and 12" letter heights be used for overhead Street Name signs. Agencies need to evaluate and decide by December 2018 whether to use these recommended letter heights or to use engineering study or judgment to decide that a smaller letter height is acceptable.

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- Background Color - MUTCD Section 2D.43 paragraph 18 requires that besides green "the only acceptable alternative background colors for Street Name (D3-1 or D3-1a) signs shall be blue, brown, or white." The lettering for green, blue, or brown signs shall be white and the lettering for white signs shall be black. This requirement applies immediately to any new Street Name signs. However, there is no deadline for existing Street Name signs to meet this requirement.
- Visibility - MUTCD Section 2D.43 paragraph 21 allows that "Street Name signs may also be placed above regulatory STOP or YIELD sign with no required vertical separation."
- Letter Font - The Standard Highway Sign manual recommends D Series font. B and C Series font may be used in cases where lateral space constraints require a limited length of sign.

Please contact the Local Policy and Technology Unit at dot.localpolicy@illinois.gov with any questions.

Sincerely,



Darrell W. Lewis, P. E.
Acting Engineer of Local Roads and Streets

Attachments

Section 2D.41 Distance Signs (D2 Series)**Standard:**

01 **If used, the Distance (D2-1 through D2-3) sign (see Figure 2D-7) shall be a horizontal rectangle of a size appropriate for the required legend, carrying the names of no more than three cities, towns, junctions, or other traffic generators, and the distance (to the nearest mile) to those places.**

02 **The distance numerals shall be placed to the right of the destination names as shown in Figure 2D-7.**

Guidance:

03 *The distance displayed should be selected on a case-by-case basis by the jurisdiction that owns the road or by statewide policy. A well-defined central area or central business district should be used where one exists. In other cases, the layout of the community should be considered in relation to the highway being signed and the decision based on where it appears that most drivers would feel that they are in the center of the community in question.*

04 *The top name on the Distance sign should be that of the next place on the route having a post office or a railroad station, a route number or name of an intersected highway, or any other significant geographical identity. The bottom name on the sign should be that of the next major destination or control city. If three destinations are displayed, the middle line should be used to indicate communities of general interest along the route or important route junctions.*

Option:

05 The choice of names for the middle line may be varied on successive Distance signs to give road users additional information concerning communities served by the route.

Guidance:

06 *The control city should remain the same on all successive Distance signs throughout the length of the route until that city is reached.*

Option:

07 If more than one distant point may properly be designated, such as where the route divides at some distance ahead to serve two destinations of similar importance, and if these two destinations cannot appear on the same sign, the two names may be alternated on successive signs.

08 On a route continuing into another State, destinations in the adjacent State may be displayed.

Section 2D.42 Location of Distance Signs*Guidance:*

01 *If used, Distance signs should be installed on important routes leaving municipalities and just beyond intersections of numbered routes in rural areas. If used, they should be placed just outside the municipal limits or at the edge of the built-up area if it extends beyond the limits.*

02 *Where overlapping routes separate a short distance from the municipal limits, the Distance sign at the municipal limits should be omitted. The Distance sign should be installed approximately 300 feet beyond the separation of the two routes.*

03 *Where, just outside of an incorporated municipality, two routes are concurrent and continue concurrently to the next incorporated municipality, the top name on the Distance sign should be that of the place where the routes separate; the bottom name should be that of the city to which the greater part of the through traffic is destined.*

Support:

04 Figure 2D-6 shows typical placements of Distance signs.

Section 2D.43 Street Name Signs (D3-1 or D3-1a)*Guidance:*

01 *Street Name (D3-1 or D3-1a) signs (see Figure 2D-10) should be installed in urban areas at all street intersections regardless of other route signs that might be present and should be installed in rural areas to identify important roads that are not otherwise signed.*

Option:

02 For streets that are part of a U.S., State, or county numbered route, a D3-1a Street Name sign (see Figure 2D-10) that incorporates a route shield may be used to assist road users who might not otherwise be able to associate the name of the street with the route number.

Standard:

03 **The lettering for names of streets and highways on Street Name signs shall be composed of a combination of lower-case letters with initial upper-case letters (see Section 2A.13).**

Figure 2D-10. Street Name and Parking Signs*Guidance:*

- 04 Lettering on post-mounted Street Name signs should be composed of initial upper-case letters at least 6 inches in height and lower-case letters at least 4.5 inches in height.
- 05 On multi-lane streets with speed limits greater than 40 mph, the lettering on post-mounted Street Name signs should be composed of initial upper-case letters at least 8 inches in height and lower-case letters at least 6 inches in height.

Option:

- 06 For local roads with speed limits of 25 mph or less, the lettering on post-mounted Street Name signs may be composed of initial upper-case letters at least 4 inches in height and lower-case letters at least 3 inches in height.

Guidance:

- 07 If overhead Street Name signs are used, the lettering should be composed of initial upper-case letters at least 12 inches in height and lower-case letters at least 9 inches in height.

Support:

- 08 The recommended minimum letter heights for Street Name signs are summarized in Table 2D-2.

Option:

- 09 Supplementary lettering to indicate the type of street (such as Street, Avenue, or Road) or the section of the city (such as NW) on the D3-1 and D3-1a signs may be in smaller lettering, composed of initial upper-case letters at least 3 inches in height and lower-case letters at least 2.25 inches in height. Conventional abbreviations (see Section 1A.15) may be used except for the street name itself.
- 10 A pictograph (see definition in Section 1A.13) may be used on a D3-1 sign.

Standard:

- 11 **Pictographs shall not be displayed on D3-1a or Advance Street Name (D3-2) signs (see Section 2D.44).**
- 12 **If a pictograph is used on a D3-1 sign, the height and width of the pictograph shall not exceed the upper-case letter height of the principal legend of the sign.**

Guidance:

- 13 *The pictograph should be positioned to the left of the street name.*

Standard:

- 14 **The Street Name sign shall be retroreflective or illuminated to show the same shape and similar color both day and night. The color of the legend (and border, if used) shall contrast with the background color of the sign.**

Option:

- 15 The border may be omitted from a Street Name sign.

Table 2D-2. Recommended Minimum Letter Heights on Street Name Signs

Type of Mounting	Type of Street or Highway	Speed Limit	Recommended Minimum Letter Height	
			Initial Upper-Case	Lower-Case
Overhead	All types	All speed limits	12 inches	9 inches
Post-mounted	Multi-lane	More than 40 mph	8 inches	6 inches
Post-mounted	Multi-lane	40 mph or less	6 inches	4.5 inches
Post-mounted	2-lane	All speed limits	6 inches*	4.5 inches*

* On local two-lane streets with speed limits of 25 mph or less, 4-inch initial upper-case letters with 3-inch lower-case letters may be used.

16 An alternative background color other than the normal guide sign color of green may be used for Street Name (D3-1 or D3-1a) signs where the highway agency determines this is necessary to assist road users in determining jurisdictional authority for roads.

Standard:

17 **Alternative background colors shall not be used for Advance Street Name (D3-2) signs (see Section 2D.44).**

18 **The only acceptable alternative background colors for Street Name (D3-1 or D3-1a) signs shall be blue, brown, or white. Regardless of whether green, blue, or brown is used as the background color for Street Name (D3-1 or D3-1a) signs, the legend (and border, if used) shall be white. For Street Name signs that use a white background, the legend (and border, if used) shall be black.**

Guidance:

19 *An alternative background color for Street Name signs, if used, should be applied to the Street Name (D3-1 or D3-1a) signs on all roadways under the jurisdiction of a particular highway agency.*

20 *In business or commercial areas and on principal arterials, Street Name signs should be placed at least on diagonally opposite corners. In residential areas, at least one Street Name sign should be mounted at each intersection. Signs naming both streets should be installed at each intersection. They should be mounted with their faces parallel to the streets they name.*

Option:

21 To optimize visibility, Street Name signs may be mounted overhead. Street Name signs may also be placed above a regulatory or STOP or YIELD sign with no required vertical separation.

Guidance:

22 *In urban or suburban areas, especially where Advance Street Name signs for signalized and other major intersections are not used, the use of overhead Street Name signs should be strongly considered.*

Option:

23 At intersection crossroads where the same road has two different street names for each direction of travel, both street names may be displayed on the same sign along with directional arrows.

Support:

24 Information regarding the use of street names on supplemental plaques for use with intersection-related warning signs is contained in Section 2C.58.

Section 2D.44 Advance Street Name Signs (D3-2)

Support:

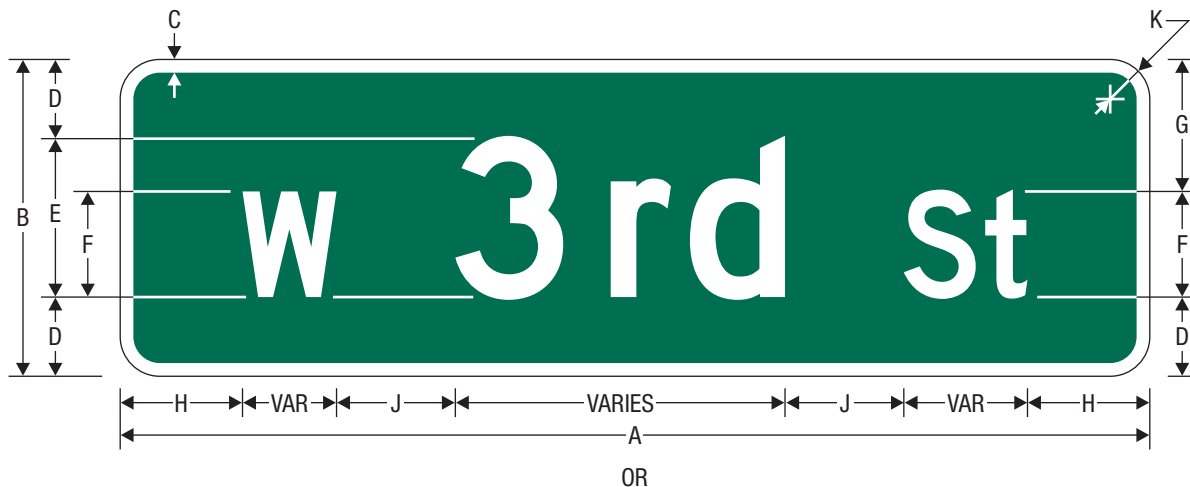
01 Advance Street Name (D3-2) signs (see Figure 2D-10) identify an upcoming intersection. Although this is often the next intersection, it could also be several intersections away in cases where the next signalized intersection is referenced.

Standard:

02 **Advance Street Name (D3-2) signs, if used, shall supplement rather than be used instead of the Street Name (D3-1) signs at the intersection.**

Option:

03 Advance Street Name (D3-2) signs may be installed in advance of signalized or unsignalized intersections to provide road users with advance information to identify the name(s) of the next intersecting street to prepare for crossing traffic and to facilitate timely deceleration and/or lane changing in preparation for a turn.



D3-1
 STREET NAME SIGN



D3-1 – PRINCIPAL LEGEND WITH DESCENDING STROKES



D3-1 – WITHOUT BORDER, PRINCIPAL LEGEND WITH OR WITHOUT DESCENDING STROKES

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N
VAR	8	0.375	2	4 D	3 D	3	3 (MIN)	3	1	1.75	2.25	2.75
VAR	12	0.5	3	6 D	4 D	5	4.5 (MIN)	4.5	1.5	2.75	3.25	4.75
VAR	18	0.75	5	8 D	5.33 D	7.67	5.33 (MIN)	6	1.875	5	5	7.67
VAR	24	1	6	12 D	8 D	10	9 (MIN)	9	2.25	5.5	6.5	9.5

COLORS: LEGEND, BORDER – WHITE (RETROREFLECTIVE)
 BACKGROUND – GREEN (RETROREFLECTIVE)
 BACKGROUND (ALTERNATE) – BLUE OR BROWN (RETROREFLECTIVE)