

1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals

Robert Nowak
Sustainable Transport Division



UNECE

1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals





International uniformity of road signs, signals and symbols and of road markings is necessary in order to facilitate international road traffic and to increase road safety



Convention on Road Signs and Signals, of 8 November 1968

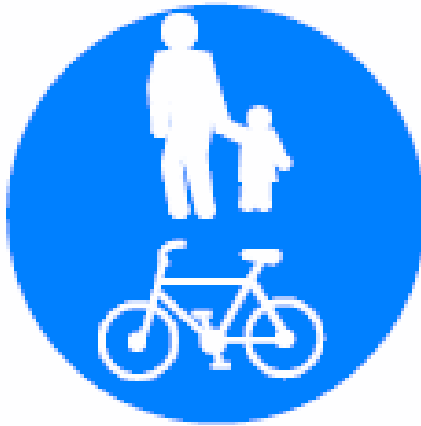
1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals



- An international system of sign classification
- Over 250 reference signs

- The system of signs and signals prescribed in this Convention is based on the use of shapes, and colours characteristic of each class of sign and, wherever possible, on the use of graphic symbols rather than inscriptions.





United States



1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals

Chapters:

1. General provisions
2. Road signs
3. Traffic light signals
4. Road markings
5. Miscellaneous
6. Final provisions

Annexes:

1. Road signs
2. Road markings
3. Reproduction of signs, symbols and panels of Annex 1

Definitions

- International traffic, road, carriageway, lane, intersection, level crossing, motorway, cycle, moped, motorcycle, motor vehicle, trailer, driver, mass ...
- No definitions of «road sign», «symbol», «panel»...



Obligations

- **Accept the system of road signs, signals and symbols and road markings described herein and undertake to adopt it as soon as possible**
- **When a sign, symbol, marking conveys certain information – cannot use any other sign, symbol, marking to convey the same information**
- **When there is no sign, symbol, marking conveying certain information
- a CP can use any sign, symbol, marking provided**
 - a. **it conforms to the system and**
 - b. **CP endeavours to secure a regional agreement**

Contracting Parties:

- **4 years to remove signs, symbols, markings with different meaning**
- **15 years to replace those signs, symbols, markings that do not conform to the Convention**

Obligations

- No requirement to adopt all the signs, markings (adopt what is strictly necessary)



Obligations

- Prohibited to install any board, notice, device which might be confused with signs
- Prohibited to affix to a sign, its support, anything not related to its purpose

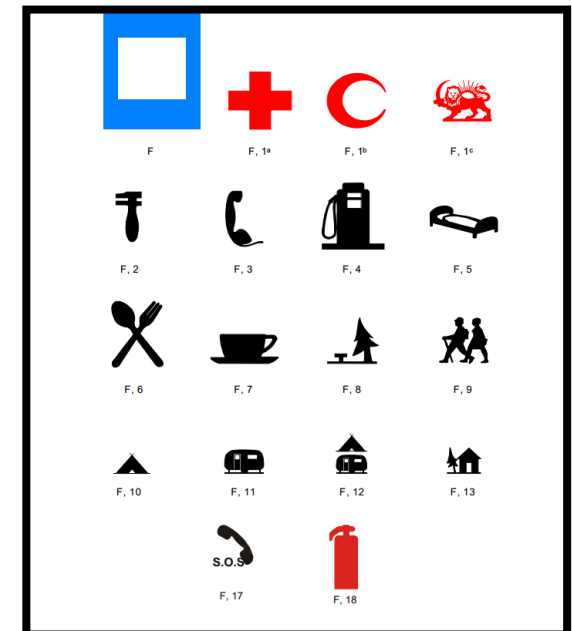
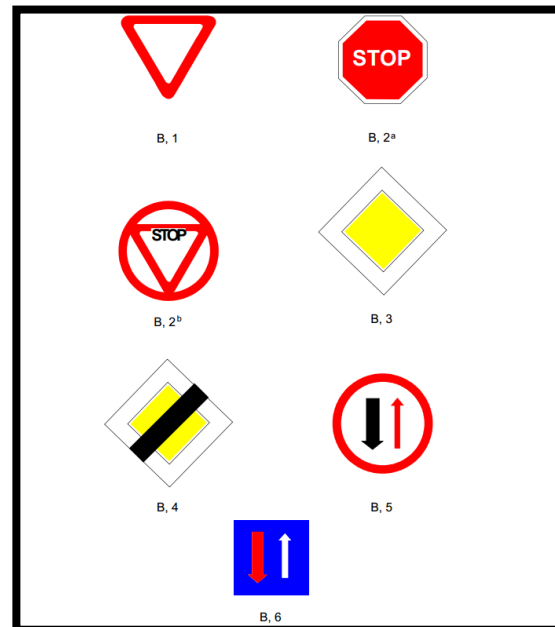
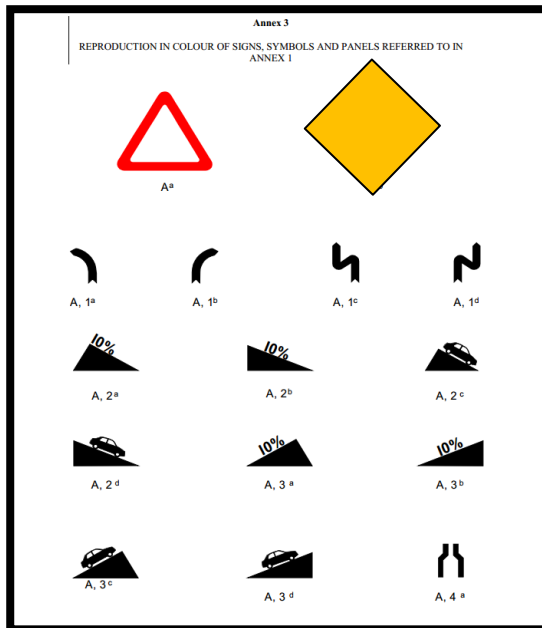


Chapter II: Road signs

The system differentiates between the following classes of road signs:

- ☐ **Danger warning signs**
- ☐ **Regulatory signs: inform road-users of special obligations, restrictions or prohibitions**
 - **Priority signs**
 - **Prohibitory or restrictive signs**
 - **Mandatory signs**
 - **Special regulation signs**
- ☐ **Informative signs: guide road-users while they are travelling or to provide them with other information**
 - **Information, facilities or service signs**
 - **Direction, position or indication signs**
 - **Advance direction signs**
 - **Direction signs**
 - **Road identification signs**
 - **Place identification signs**
 - **Confirmatory signs**
 - **Indication signs**
 - **Additional panels**

- Danger warning
- Regulatory
- Informative

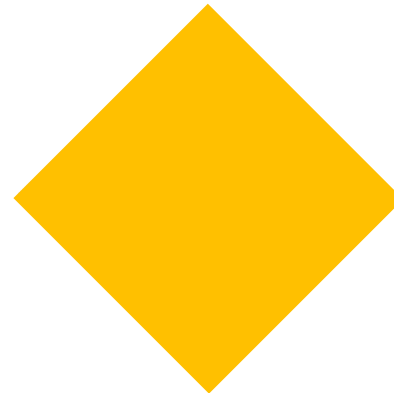


Where the Convention allows a choice of signs/symbols:

- Contracting Parties undertake to adopt only one of such signs or symbols for the whole of their territories
- Contracting Parties shall endeavour to reach regional agreements on the same choice

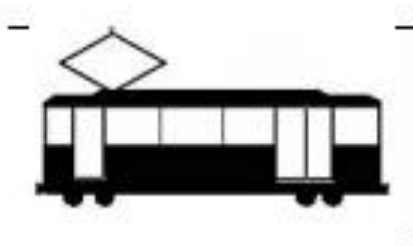


A^a



A^b

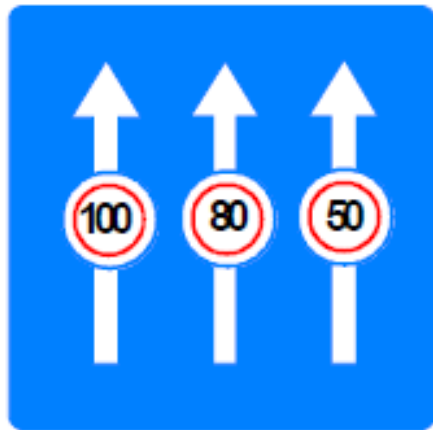
- Where Contracting Parties consider it necessary to modify the symbols prescribed, the modifications made shall not alter their essential characteristics.



- Signs shall be so placed that the drivers can recognize them easily and in time
- They shall normally be placed on the side of the road appropriate to the direction of traffic (may be placed or repeated above the carriageway)
- A sign shall be repeated above or on the other side of the carriageway if local conditions are such that it might not be seen in time



- All signs shall apply to the drivers for whom they are intended over the whole width of the carriageway open to traffic
- Signs may be made to apply to only one or to several lanes of the carriageway when lanes are defined by longitudinal markings.



E,1^c



- **Recommendation: signs shall be so placed that they do not obstruct vehicular traffic on the carriageway, and, if placed on the verges, obstruct pedestrians as little as possible.**



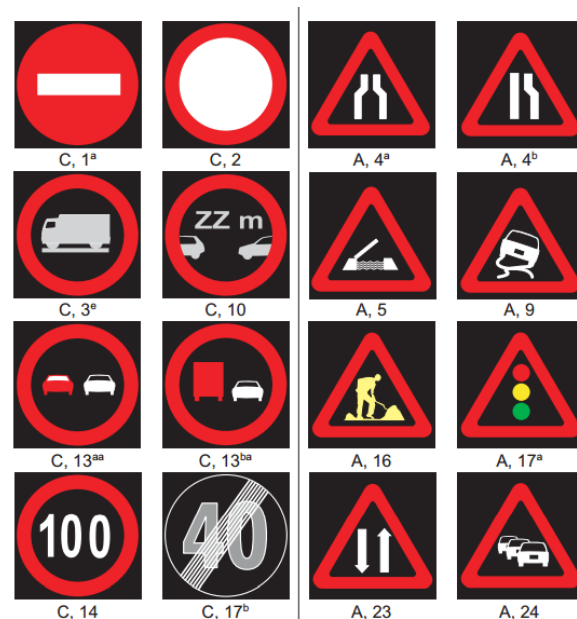
- **Recommendation: the dimensions of sign panels**
 - ☐ **easily visible from a distance**
 - ☐ **easily understood by a person approaching it**
 - ☐ **dimensions adapted to the normal speed of vehicles**

- **Dark or light graphic elements of different colours in the signs may be differentiated by means of contrasting light or dark narrow strips respectively**

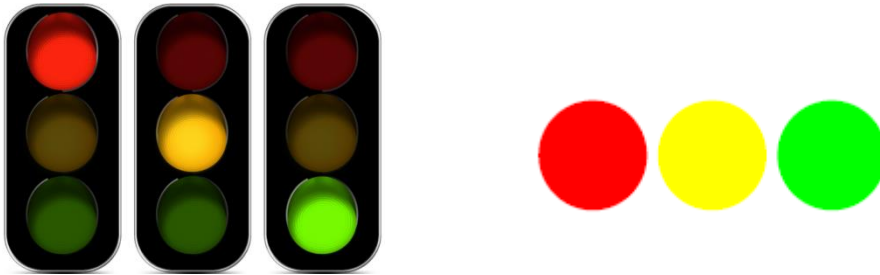


Chapter II: Road signs

- Nothing in this Convention shall prohibit the use of warnings or rules applying only at certain times of signs which are visible only when the information they convey is relevant
- Provided that no error of interpretation is possible, the prescribed dark-coloured signs or symbols may appear in a light colour, light-coloured backgrounds then being replaced by dark backgrounds. The red colour of the symbol of a sign and its border shall not be changed.



- ❑ The only lights which may be used as light signals for regulating vehicle traffic, other than those intended solely for public transport vehicles ...
 - Non-flashing lights
 - Red, amber and green: position and meanings defined



- Flashing lights
 - One or two red lights (level crossings, swing bridges...)
 - One amber light (for not heavy traffic)
 - Additional green light with an arrow
- Placed before the intersection or in the middle of and above it; they may be repeated at the far side of the intersection and/or at the driver's eye level

☐ Light signals for pedestrians ...

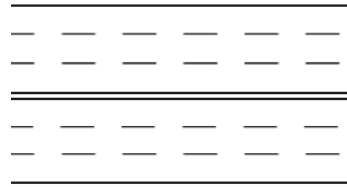
- **Flashing:**
 - Light signals of the (preferably) two colour system
 - Possible to use the three colour system
 - Red – (preferably) standing pedestrian, green – (preferably) walking pedestrian
- **Non-flashing:**
 - Green light only
- **Always positioned vertically, red at the top...**



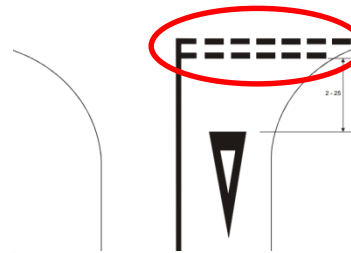
- **Road markings shall be used, when the competent authority considers it necessary, to regulate traffic or to warn or guide road-users**
- **They may be used either alone or in conjunction with other signs or signals to emphasize or clarify their meaning**

- **A continuous line(s): no straddling, no crossing, no using the other lane**
- **A broken line: to demarcate lanes, to give warning**
- **A continuous and broken line**
- **Marking of lanes reserved for specific categories of vehicles (cycle, bus): different**

- **Longitudinal marking**



- **Transverse marking**



- **Other markings**



- **Colour of markings (white, yellow, blue for parking)**
- **Modification of markings for construction periods**

- **Temporary markings shall take precedence over permanent markings and road users are required to conform to them**
- **When the simultaneous presence of permanent and temporary road markings could be a source of confusion, the permanent markings shall be covered over or removed**

- **Signs for road works**
- **Marking by lights or reflecting devices**
- **Level crossings**
 - **Use/installation of lights and/or sound signals**
 - **Marking of level crossings, with or without gates**

Annexes:

- 1. Road signs**
- 2. Road markings**
- 3. Reproduction of signs, symbols and panels of Annex 1**

www.unece.org

