



Traffic Guidelines Manual

ORIGINATOR State Traffic Engineer	2-2-54
CHAPTER 2	Signing
SECTION 2	Regulatory Signs
SUBJECT 54	Stop For School Bus Flashing Red Lights State Law Sign

A. Purpose

Wisconsin State Statute [346.48](#) mandates that motorists approaching a school bus from the front or rear **shall** stop when the bus is displaying the flashing red lights. The exception to this is oncoming motorists would not have to stop if there is a physical separation in the median, as in the case of divided highways. Often times requests come to the WisDOT Region offices to install signs for areas where motorist compliance is problematic. Typically these are areas where there are multiple school bus stops and the sight distance does not warrant the placement of the SCHOOL BUS STOP AHEAD warning sign (S3-1 sign). In the past, the STOP FOR SCHOOL BUS FLASHING RED LIGHTS STATE LAW (R59-51 sign) has been installed for these problem areas. However, due to a lack of statewide guidance, these signs have been used inconsistently.

Section 2B.54 of the 2009 MUTCD allows the customization of regulatory signs to aid in the enforcement of other laws or regulations. Therefore, the STOP FOR SCHOOL BUS FLASHING RED LIGHTS STATE LAW (R59-51 sign) has been designed to reinforce Wisconsin State Statute 346.48 and aid law enforcement for problem areas. Listed below are criteria that *should* be followed when considering the placement of these signs.

B. Definitions

Freeways are defined as divided arterial highway facilities that have full controlled access, by means of grade separation at interchanges only.

Expressways are defined as divided arterial highway facilities that have partial control of access and generally with grade separations at major intersections.

Conventional Highways are defined as divided or undivided roadway facilities that have limited access with no grade separations at intersections. These highways *may* be two lane or multilane facilities.

C. Policy

Below are policy criteria that *should* be applied when considering installations of the STOP FOR SCHOOL BUS FLASHING RED LIGHTS STATE LAW (R59-51 sign).

1. For installation of the STOP FOR SCHOOL BUS FLASHING RED LIGHTS STATE LAW (R59-51 sign) on expressways, TGM policy 2-3-55 *should* be followed.
2. If a specific school bus stop has a sight distance less than the minimum visibility distance for warning signs per the Wisconsin MUTCD Supplement, the School Bus Stop Ahead (S3-1) warning sign *should* be used.
3. The STOP FOR SCHOOL BUS FLASHING RED LIGHTS STATE LAW (R59-51 sign) *may* be used for segments of conventional highways that have the following criteria:
 - Multiple stops on a segment of roadway.
 - Documented compliance problems exist.
 - Sight distance is not a factor that would not allow the use of warning signs for most of the stops in the segment of roadway.
4. If the STOP FOR SCHOOL BUS FLASHING RED LIGHTS STATE LAW (R59-51 sign) is warranted, it *should* be installed at the beginning of the segment and *may* be repeated every 5 miles if the segment is greater than five miles or after major intersections (at the discretion of the Region Traffic Engineer).
5. In considering the usage of this sign, the Regions are encouraged to obtain a school bus route map or other information supplied by the school district to identify the locations of the stops. The Region *should* contact the school Districts annually to determine where stops are no longer made so that signing can be adjusted accordingly.