



## Traffic Guidelines Manual

ORIGINATOR State Traffic Engineer	2-4-49
CHAPTER 2	Signing
SECTION 4	Guide Signs – Conventional
SUBJECT 49	Street Name Signs

### A. Purpose

The 2009 MUTCD, [Section 2D.43](#) states that street name signs *should* be installed at intersections. Standards and guidance are contained in [Section 2D.43](#) of the 2009 MUTCD regarding letter sizes, colors and retroreflectivity of the street name signs.

Traditionally, local units of government have installed ground mounted street name signs at intersections of WisDOT maintained roadways. These ground mounted street name signs are installed and maintained by the local unit of government, in accordance with the 2009 MUTCD and corresponding Wisconsin Supplement to the MUTCD.

The 2009 MUTCD, [Section 2D.43](#) also provides guidance and standards on the design of overhead street name signs at intersections. These types of overhead street name signs are commonly mounted on overhead traffic signal structures at the intersection. The overhead street name signs provide a lot of value in that they are larger and easier for the motorist to see (especially in urban environments where there are a lot of other competing signs, two or more travel lanes in each direction and closely spaced intersections). Now that the usage of traffic signal monotube arms have replaced the more traditional trombone arm traffic signal structure in Wisconsin, the attachment of overhead street name signs to the traffic signal structure has become much more practical.

The following policy criteria applies to both ground mounted and overhead street name signs that are installed on WisDOT roadways.

### B. Policy

#### Ground Mounted Street Name Signs

1. Local units of government are allowed to install ground mounted street name signs on WisDOT roadways. No permit is required for ground mounted street name signs.

2. Ground mounted street name signs **shall not** be installed on WisDOT maintained sign posts. Ground mounted street name signs **shall** be placed on their own supports and *should* be placed in the opposite quadrant as the STOP sign, typically on the left side so they do not obstruct the motorist's view of the STOP sign or any other signs.
3. The local unit of government **shall** pay for all costs associated with the manufacture, installation and maintenance of ground mounted street name signs.

#### Overhead Street Name Signs

1. WisDOT will install and maintain overhead street name signs on WisDOT maintained traffic signal monotube structures only.
2. In accordance with TGM 2-4-50, WisDOT **shall** also install advance crossroad name signs on divided roadways with posted speeds of 45 mph or greater and 2-lane conventional highways with posted speeds of 55 mph that are on the national Highway System. The Region has the option to additionally install advance crossroad name signing on divided roadways with posted speeds of less than 45 mph.
3. For overhead street name signs mounted on traffic signal monotube arms, in addition to the overall sign size restrictions, the sign **shall** not exceed a lateral mounting distance of 15 feet from the upright (distance from upright to center of sign). See SDD 9E-8 (sheets a-d) for the placement of overhead street name signs on traffic signal monotubes.
4. For WisDOT maintained overhead street name signs, only the standard M1-94H or M1-94S sign with white letters on green background will be allowed.
5. For existing overhead street name signs that have already been permitted on WisDOT maintained traffic signal monotube structures, WisDOT *may* assume the maintenance of the signs (permission needed from local unit of government), provided the signs meet WisDOT design standards. Otherwise, the signs would be grandfathered until they wear out and then replaced by signs that meet WisDOT design standards and maintained by WisDOT at that point.
6. For existing WisDOT maintained urban traffic signal monotube structures that do not currently have street name signs attached to them, the overhead street name signs *may* be installed as part of an improvement project. If the local unit of government wishes to have overhead street name signs installed prior to an improvement projects, they will need to incur the installation costs. Maintenance of the signs will be by WisDOT.

#### Sign Design and Manufacture

1. Due to wind loading restrictions on overhead traffic signal monotubes, overhead sign sizes *should not* exceed 18" in height or 108" in length. If larger street name signs are needed (i.e. longer street names or different street names in each

direction), then the monotube wind loading calculations **shall** be calculated to ensure adequate wind loading (see Traffic Signal Design Manual 6-1-11).

2. For overhead street name signs, 12" initial upper case/9" lower case *should* be used for the street name. If overall sign size is a concern, 8" initial upper case/6" lower case letter heights *may* be used.
3. For all ground mounted street name signs, only blue, brown, white or green backgrounds **shall** be used. The legend for ground mounted street name signs **shall** be white for blue, brown or green background signs. The legend **shall** be black for white background signs. Overhead street name signs on WisDOT maintained traffic signal monotube structures **shall** be white letters on green background.
4. Pictographs in the form of a community symbol or highway route shield *may* be used on either non-WisDOT maintained overhead street name signs or any ground mounted street name signs. The height and width of the pictograph **shall not** exceed the height of the upper case letter of the principle legend on the sign. Pictographs **shall not** contain commercial advertising.
5. For new overhead and ground mounted street name signs, the mixture of initial upper case / lower case lettering **shall** be used. Existing street name signs with all capital letters are allowed to remain until they wear out or are replaced in projects.
6. Ground mounted street name signs *should* have a minimum letter heights of 6" initial upper case / 4 ½" lower case for 2 lane conventional highways (all posted speeds) and multi-lane conventional highways (posted speeds 40 mph or less). Ground mounted street name signs on multi-lane conventional highways with posted speeds greater than 40 mph *should* have minimum letter heights of 8" initial upper case / 6" lower case. 4" initial upper case / 3" lower case letters *may* be used on local two-lane streets with posted speed limits of 25 mph or less.
7. Supplementary lettering to indicate the direction (North, South, East or West) or the type of street (St, Ave, or Rd) *may* be used. For ground mounted street name signs, minimum supplementary letter heights of 3" upper case / 2 ¼" lower case letters *should* be used. For overhead street name signs with 12" initial upper case/9" lower case letter heights for the street name, supplementary letter heights of 6" initial upper case / 4 ½" lower case letters **shall** be used. If using 8" initial upper case/6" lower case letter heights for the street name, 4" initial upper case/3" lower case supplementary letters **shall** be used. If used, route shields on overhead street name signs **shall** be the same height as the upper case letters of the street name.