

A Teachers' Guide to
Highway
Signs



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Drivers rely heavily on informative, visible signs to tell them where they're going, what's up ahead, how fast to drive and when to stop or change lanes, among many other things. MoDOT's Sign Production Center consistently and efficiently produces signs in a timely fashion for roadways across the state.

Your students probably see highway signs every day on their way to school. Highway signs are designed to convey important information quickly with just a simple message or symbol. Signs play a big role in the Missouri Department of Transportation's operations, and we want your students to understand what they mean.

Following is a brief description of the signs in this set. If you would like someone from the department to speak to your class about signs or other transportation topics, please call or write the district office nearest you.

A Few Little-Known Facts First

Shortly after the creation of the Highway Department in 1920, the first MoDOT Sign Production Center began furnishing high-quality traffic signs for Missouri's expanding highway system.

MoDOT now makes approximately 130,000 signs per year, including replacement of old or worn out signs, new signs and many non-highway signs.

- Missouri has more than 700,000 signs on the state system.
- The average cost for a stop sign is \$400 to make and install.
- The largest sign the shop has produced was 36 feet wide by 16 feet tall.
- The sign shop constructs all its signs with only 14 employees.
- Recycled sign material is used whenever possible. Up to 70 percent of our signs are made on reclaimed material when it is available, saving up to 70 percent over purchasing new aluminum.
- MoDOT saves more than 1 million annually by recycling its signs.
- Signs are easily damaged and/or destroyed by things like paint balls, soda or any other object that is thrown at the signs.
- Theft or damage of a state highway signs can result in up to a \$1,000 fine and a year in prison due to the safety aspects related to signs.
- Sign life expectancy is 10 to 12 years.

Typical Highway Signs

Guide Signs



These green background signs generally give guidance information to travelers to help them get from one point to another.

Emergency Reference Markers

These signs are found along interstate highways. In bad weather, a driver can use these signs to see where the edge of the road is, but more importantly, if someone needs help the information on these signs can be given to a 911 operator and help can find them very quickly.

Informational Signs

Informational signs are typically white and blue and provide motorists information on the location of services such as gas, food, lodging, rest areas etc.

Miscellaneous Signs

These signs tell drivers of programs or laws that pertain to them.



No MORE Trash!

Littering in Missouri can mean up to a \$1,000 fine and/or a year in jail. This green, black and white sign reminds drivers to keep their litter in the trashcan and not on the roads.

Adopt-A-Highway

Missouri was one of the first states in the country to begin the Adopt-A-Highway program in 1987. These blue and yellow signs tell who has adopted a particular highway and what they are doing – litter cleanup, beautification, mowing or wildflower planting.



Regulatory Signs

Regulatory signs are typically a combination of red, black and white and alert motorists to absolute boundaries of what they can and cannot do on the road.

Buckle Up

This sign is used to remind drivers to use seat belts and that there is a state law which requires anyone in a car use a seat belt.



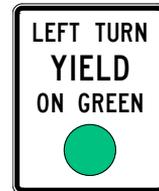
Do Not Enter

This red and white sign tells drivers not to enter a roadway marked with this sign, as they will be traveling the wrong way down a one-way street. It is typically used on exit ramps where drivers might turn the wrong way.



Left Turn Yield On Green

This sign is located next to a left turn signal and tells the driver that if a green ball indication is displayed they may make a left turn, but must give the right of way to the oncoming traffic first. Only when a green arrow is displayed can a left turn be made without yielding to other vehicles.



No U Turn

Black, white and red, this sign shows drivers locations where they can't make U-shaped turns. These could be in high-traffic locations other places where this type of turn could be unsafe.



Slow Traffic Keep Right

These signs remind motorists that Missouri state law says you must drive in the right lane of a divided highway unless you are passing.



Typical Highway Signs



Speed Limit

These signs tell the motorist what is the maximum legal and safe speed to travel on a road under good conditions. A driver will need to drive slower in rain, snow, fog or other conditions that may reduce visibility or make the roadway slippery.



Stop

A stop sign tells the driver that they must come to a full and complete stop at an intersection and give the right of way to other cars or pedestrians who are already in the intersection before proceeding.



Yield

A yield sign tells a driver they must give the right of way to other cars or pedestrians at the intersection before proceeding. If there is no other traffic to yield to, a driver does not have to come to a complete stop.

School Signs

These signs help motorists know where school related activities are occurring and what the state law is regarding schools bus operations.



Stop for School Bus

You'll see this white and black sign along various state highways throughout Missouri. This tells you when you must stop for a school bus.



School Crossing

This sign is used to warn drivers that a school cross walk is ahead. This sign is also used at the actual cross walk where an arrow pointing down at the crosswalk is placed under this sign.

Warning Signs

Warning signs let drivers know they will have to prepare for or adjust their driving for something coming up on the road.

Divided Highway

This yellow and black sign tells driver that the road they are traveling on will become a divided highway ahead. This means a concrete curb, barrier wall or a grass median instead of just a painted line will separate the traffic traveling in opposite directions from each other.



Lane Ends Merge Left

This sign informs drivers that the right lane is ending and they must move to the left lane. The plaque under the sign tells the driver the distance to the end of the lane.



Reduced Speed Ahead

This sign tells the driver that the speed limit is changing and what the new speed limit will be. It is normally only used when the speed limit is reduced 15 mph or more.



Signal Ahead

This colorful yellow, black, red and green sign tells drivers they are approaching an intersection controlled by traffic signals. It urges them to be cautious and alert to changes in the signal lights.



Slippery When Wet

This yellow and black sign appears near sections of highways where surfaces are worn and become more slippery than normal when there is rain or snow on them. Drivers need to adjust their driving in bad weather.



Typical Highway Signs



Stop Ahead

This sign is used to tell a driver that a stop sign is ahead and they should slow down and prepare to stop.



Two-Way Traffic

Motorists see this yellow and black sign with two opposing arrows when the road they are driving on changes from a four-lane divided road to a two-lane, two-way undivided roadway. Passing should be done with extreme caution.



Winding Road

This sign tells motorists that the road ahead has many close curves. The advisory speed plaque below the sign tells the driver the safe speed to drive through these curves. The winding road sign may also have a distance plaque under it telling the driver how many miles of winding roads they will encounter. Normally when this sign is seen, the individual curves will not have their own curve signs.



Yield Ahead

This sign is used to tell a driver that a yield is ahead and they should slow down and be ready to stop or yield to another vehicle.

Work Zone Signs

Detour

This orange and black sign tells drivers they will have to take another route in order to reach their destination, because of construction or other incidents.



Hit a Worker/\$250 Fine Sign

These black and white signs tell you what the penalties are if you pass, speed or hit a worker in a work zone.

Flagger Ahead

This sign tells the driver that there is a person in the work zone ahead that will be giving them instructions to stop, slow down or change lanes.

Mowers Ahead

This orange and black sign is a temporary work zone sign department maintenance crews put up on the highway when they are mowing our roadsides.

Road Work Ahead

This sign is typically one of the first signs a driver will see when there is some type of roadwork being done. The driver should be prepared so slow down, change lanes or stop depending on the instructions seen on the following signs.

The Difference is YOU. Drive Smart.

You'll see these signs when approaching highway construction work zones. They remind drivers to drive safely in work zones.



Look for these signs and many others on Missouri's roadways. Visit modot.org or call 888-ASK MODOT for more information on signs and other topics. For additional sign info, go to the Federal Highway Administrations Web site to see the Federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2003r1/pdf-index.htm>

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modot.org