



STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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SECRETARY

MEMORANDUM

To: All Users of Delaware Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

From: Mark Luszcz, P.E., PTOE *ML*
Chief Traffic Engineer

Date: November 5, 2013

Subject: Overhead Street Signs Mounted on Traffic Signals

The DelDOT design criteria for overhead mounted street names differs from the recommended minimum lettering heights provided in **Paragraph 07 of Section 2D.43** of the *Delaware Manual on Uniform Control Devices for Streets and Highways* (DE MUTCD). As a result, sign heights per the design criteria also differ from that recommended in **Table 2D-2** of the **DE MUTCD**. Our experience has indicated that an 8-inch letter height is typically of sufficient size, when mounted on traffic signal span wires or mast arms, to properly convey street name information to the driving public. Although this does not meet the recommended MUTCD criteria on higher speed roadways for letter height and legibility distance, taken in context with advanced street name signing, the conspicuous mounting location (overhead), and the presence of a significant traffic control "landmark" (the traffic signal), signs with 8-inch capital/6-inch lower case letters are sufficient. Furthermore, we have experienced significant problems with bracket mounting hardware, and many failures that have resulted in overhead signs falling to the ground when we attempted to utilize signs with larger letter heights. Finally, we could consider using a larger letter height on the same sized sign (18-inches sign height); however, the reduction of the margins on the sign would violate a standard in the MUTCD (Section 2A.11, Paragraph 2).

This memorandum is therefore issued to document the DelDOT design criteria for overhead mounted street name signs and provide details/illustrations of the overhead street name signs and mounting hardware.

DESIGN CRITERIA

1. All new traffic control signals, and traffic control signals that are undergoing significant retrofits, should include overhead street name signs (SNS) unless otherwise noted in this document, or other valid engineering or community involvement reasons are documented (i.e., DelDOT and a municipality agree that overhead SNSs are not needed in a specific low speed, downtown area due to aesthetic concerns).
2. All SNSs on span wires and on mast arms should have the following characteristics:
 - a. Be dual sided (except for one-way streets)
 - b. Be hung below the span wire or mast arm
 - c. Have a maximum width of 120 inches (10 feet)
 - d. Have an initial upper case height of eight inches (8"), and lower case height of six inches (6"), Highway Gothic D Lettering
 - e. Have seventeen feet (17 feet) minimum clearance from roadway surface to bottom of sign
 - f. Be installed **only** when the angle of the mast arm or span wire perpendicular to the direction of travel is less than 30 degrees. Regulatory signs can be hung with a pivot bracket.
3. Overhead SNSs conforming to the design criteria outlined above may incorporate a route shield when the roadway meets the conditions set out in the **DE MUTCD Section 2D.43 Paragraph 02**. State Route and US Route markers can be added to the left portion of the SNS; but shall not extend the length beyond 120" or increase the height of the sign. The symbol should be proportioned on the sign, so as not to distort the State Route or US Route symbol. If the length of the road name is so long that the 120 inches maximum width will be exceeded, the state or US route shield with the GREEN border measuring 18" X 18" overall, may be used without the street name (see page 5)
4. The designer should avoid overhead street name signs with two lines of lettering if at all possible. Typically, if a cross street has different names on either side of the intersection; two separate one-line signs should be used. In circumstances where a two line sign cannot be avoided, the designer should bring the issue up for discussion at the Project Process Meeting for an agreement regarding whether the sign should be used or not. If the use of the two-line street name sign is agreed, the designer should then contact Lori Hutson (302.760.2581; lori.hutson@state.de.us) for sizing based on the new design criteria.
5. Single line SNSs should not be tethered. Two line SNSs with a back plate application may be tethered, at the Engineers direction.

