

Land Transport Rule: Traffic Control Devices Amendment [2010]

(Rule 54002/4)

Questions and Answers

1. What are traffic control devices?

Traffic control devices are signs, markings, signals, islands and other devices placed on or adjacent to roads, footpaths and cycle paths that are used to instruct, warn, guide or advise road users.

2. Why is this amendment Rule being proposed?

The purpose of this proposed amendment Rule is to make changes to *Land Transport Rule: Traffic Control Devices 2004* (the Traffic Control Devices Rule or the Rule).

The Rule sets out the requirements for safe, appropriate and consistent design, construction, installation, operation and maintenance of traffic control devices by road controlling authorities (RCAs) nationwide. It aims to ensure traffic control devices are consistent throughout New Zealand, so that road users know what to do in areas which aren't familiar to them. The Rule contributes to the safe and efficient operation of our road network by ensuring traffic control devices:

- are uniform in their appearance and placement
- adhere to minimum standards
- are designed, installed and used by RCAs with regard to safe practice.

3. What changes are proposed?

The proposed amendment Rule would allow RCAs to take advantage of a wider range of traffic control devices to implement, improve or maintain safe and efficient traffic management. The proposed changes to the Rule will also ensure that the Traffic Control Devices Rule is consistent with the *Land Transport (Road User) Rule 2004* (the Road User Rule) and other legislation, update engineering practice and allow the use of some new technologies.

A Parking Working Group including representatives from the New Zealand Parking Association, RCAs, the Automobile Association, the Ministry of Transport and the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) considered current issues and advised the NZTA on possible changes. Based on this advice, the NZTA developed the parking proposals contained in the draft amendment Rule.

4. What is the legal basis for the proposed amendment Rule?

Section 157 of the *Land Transport Act 1998* provides for the Minister of Transport to make Land Transport Rules that empower road controlling authorities to control, restrict, and prohibit traffic, and that provide for the design, construction, maintenance, and operation of traffic control devices.

5. Who will the proposed changes affect?

The proposed amendment Rule will primarily affect RCAs (ie, mainly local councils) but will, to varying degrees, also affect all road users (motorists, cyclists and pedestrians).

6. What are the specific changes in the amendment Rule?

Most of the proposed changes to the Rule are of a technical nature, and will be mainly of interest to RCAs, but there are some changes that will be of wider, public interest.

They include the following proposals.

- A new regime for defining parking zones, and signing and marking parking restrictions.
- Changes to the existing descriptions of parking signs. The proposed new format will provide more flexibility and support changes to the new zone parking regime.
- Replacing the existing provisions for managing traffic entering a roundabout with traffic signals.
- Improving traffic signalling at multi-laned approaches to areas controlled by traffic signals.
- Allowing the installation of nearside, mid-block pedestrian traffic signal displays, countdown pedestrian signals and on-roadway warning lights at pedestrian crossings.

New regime for defining parking zones

7. Why is this proposed change needed?

There is considerable pressure to reduce the number of signs required to indicate parking restrictions. This is an issue particularly where Central Business District parking encroaches into residential areas and affects the urban environment. Reducing the number of signs will also reduce costs. Also, within business districts there is an increasing need for a parking space to have multiple uses throughout the week and for this reason the proposed change will enable greater flexibility for how parking signs display the relevant information.

8. What changes might occur under this proposal?

The Rule currently requires signs to be installed at entry and exit points of a parking zone. They must also be placed at each end of any intervening parking restriction, such as bus stops.

It is proposed that RCAs mark the road surface, if practicable, to indicate restricted parking areas (such as bus stops) in a parking zone. This would result in less need for as many signs enabling a reduction in the number of signs that must be erected, and a decrease in the frequency of repeat signage at intervals along the length of the restricted area.

9. Would a road controlling authority have to establish zone parking in its area?

No. The Rule only prescribes how parking zones shall be defined by appropriate signs and markings, if an RCA decides to establish one.

10. What changes are proposed for parking areas that are not zone parking areas?

It is proposed to allow more parking signs at any one location to explain the full range of parking restrictions that may apply, provided that the signs conform with the proposed format.

It is also proposed that, if a parking area, other than zone parking, has been marked then signs will only be required at one end and at intervals of not more than 200m.

Some additional proposals for defining parking restrictions include:

- restricting blue marking solely for parking spaces reserved for disabled persons
- defining the term 'parking machine' to cover all types of device by which a person pays for the use of a parking space and require all the conditions (fees and time limits, etc) to be described on the machine
- providing options to existing markings and introduction of some new forms of marking for special parking areas such as bus stops, taxi stands, loading zones
- creating a new symbol "P\$" to be used on a sign to indicate that a fee is required to park in an area.

For more detail on all the proposed changes, please read the Overview to the draft amendment Rule <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/consultation/tcd-amendment-2010/>.

11. When would these new parking restrictions come into force?

The proposed changes would apply only to new parking restrictions. Existing signs and markings would still be used as long as they remain in good repair and are safe and adequate for their use. RCAs wouldn't be required to make changes all at once, they would be phased in over time.

12. How will the proposed amendment Rule affect the public?

The amendment Rule proposes changes to how some control devices look, and how they are used, as well as introducing some new devices. These changes are consistent with the existing design of traffic control devices, so it is not expected that road users will have trouble adjusting to the new devices. If these changes go ahead, the Road User Rule will need to be amended. This Rule sets out the responsibilities of all road users (motorists, cyclists, riders and pedestrians), including the need to comply with traffic control devices.

13. If RCAs use the new parking signs will it still be clear where drivers can park and what parking restrictions are?

The proposed amendment Rule would allow RCAs to take advantage of a wider range of traffic control devices to implement, improve or maintain safe and efficient traffic management. This would help reduce the number of signs needed and improve the clarity of parking signs for drivers.

14. How would the public be made aware if changes are made?

As parking signs will be brought in at different times in different regions the responsibility for promoting changes to the local community would lie with the RCAs.

15. The amendment Rule would require the installation of some new traffic control devices. Who would pay the extra cost?

In most cases, there should be no additional cost. For example, existing markings and signs that conform to the existing Rule will be able to continue in use. They will be changed or upgraded to new formats as part of RCAs' normal maintenance schedules.

16. Who can install traffic control devices?

In most circumstances, they can only be installed by RCAs or their authorised agents (eg road construction companies).

17. How will road controlling authorities know how to comply with these new requirements?

The NZTA will provide guidance material for all RCAs.

18. Are there any new offences and penalties proposed?

It is proposed to place a time limit on the use of manually-operated flashing school bus signs to the period from just prior to the bus stopping to pick up or drop off children until shortly after it has recommenced its journey. If this is accepted, the operator's obligation to comply will be subject to the same offence provisions applying to the existing use of school bus signs (ie, infringement fee of \$150 or maximum penalty on summary conviction of \$500). However, it may be more appropriate to place this requirement in the Road User Rule rather than this Rule, and consideration of that option will follow consultation.

Consultation details

19. What is the consultation process for the amendment Rule?

The public consultation (yellow) draft Rule has been released for comment. The availability of the draft Rule and associated information material will be advertised in major daily newspapers and in the *New Zealand Gazette*. Groups and individuals who have registered their interest in this Rule will be advised of the availability of the yellow draft and invited to make a submission.

20. How can I obtain a copy of the draft amendment Rule?

Copies of the yellow draft amendment Rule, with the accompanying overview, can be accessed on the NZ Transport Agency's website at <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/consultation/tcd-amendment-2010/>. A copy can also be obtained by telephoning the NZ Transport Agency Contact Centre on 0800 699 000.

21. How can I make a submission?

If possible, please send your submission by email to info@nzta.govt.nz and, if you wish, follow it up with a signed paper copy. Alternatively, you can submit your comments on-line at <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/consultation/tcd-amendment-2010/>

If posting your submission, please address it to:

Traffic Control Devices Rule
Rules Team
NZ Transport Agency
PO Box 5084

Lambton Quay
Wellington 6145

Please send your submission to reach the NZTA by 5pm on Wednesday 19 May 2010. Please note: submissions are public information. Please indicate clearly if your comments are commercially sensitive, or if, for some other reason, you do not want them disclosed.

For more information on this proposal, you can:
access the website at <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/consultation/tcd-amendment-2010/>

or

telephone the NZTA Contact Centre on 0800 699 000.

22. By when do I need to send in my submission?

Submissions close at 5pm on Wednesday 19 May.

23. What will happen to my comments?

Comments made in submissions will be analysed and taken into account in redrafting the Rule for the final draft phase.

The final version of the Rule will go to Cabinet for noting and will then be signed by the Minister of Transport.

24. Where can I get more information?

Further information about the proposed amendments is available from the NZ Transport Agency Contact Centre, freephone 0800 699 000.