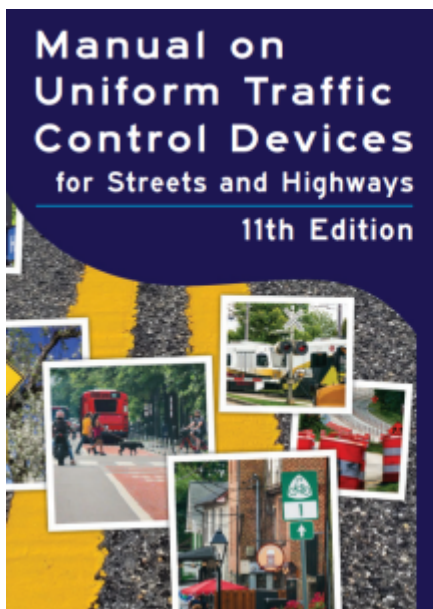


When Will New MUTCD Standards Apply in Vermont?



The federal government released a new edition of the [*Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highway*](#) (the MUTCD) in December 2023. The 11th Edition revises how speed limits are set, recommends a “safe systems” approach, and doubles its focus on bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. See our [article](#) about the updates. The revisions will become effective on January 18, 2024. States are required to adopt the MUTCD within two years of its effective date or have a state MUTCD/supplement that substantially conforms with the national manual.

If your municipality has a project that is funded with federal or state transportation funds, MUTCD compliance must follow the Vermont MUTCD transition plan described below.

Additionally, because all traffic control devices in Vermont must comply with the MUTCD, VTrans recommends that municipalities consider a similar timeline for locally funded projects.

Adoption of the MUTCD 11th Edition

- Through this year's [Transportation Bill](#) (pages 63 and 64), the Vermont General Assembly (legislature) updated language in Vermont State Statute regarding adoption of the MUTCD. These revisions clarify that Vermont is adopting the 11th Edition of the manual according to the compliance date established by Federal Rule, which is January 18, 2026.
- VTrans is revising standard drawings, specifications, and engineering Instructions to conform to the new MUTCD. This effort will be complete by July 1, 2025.
- Existing signs, signals, and pavement markings may remain in place for their useful service life except for those devices noted in Table 1B-1, which must be brought into compliance by the date noted.

Table 1B-1. Target Compliance Dates Established by the FHWA

MUTCD Section(s)	Subject Area	Specific Provision	Compliance Date
2B.64	Weight Limit Signs	Paragraph 14 - requirement for additional Weight Limit sign with the advisory distance or directional legend in advance of applicable section of highway or structure	5 years from the effective date of this edition of the MUTCD
2C.25	Low Clearance Signs (W12-2)	Paragraph 1 - Required posting of the Low Clearance Advance (W12-2) sign in advance of the structure	5 years from the effective date of this edition of the MUTCD
2C.25	Low Clearance Signs (W12-2a, W12-2b)	Paragraph 8 - Recommended posting of Low Clearance Overhead (W12-2a or 12-2b) signs on an arch or other structure under which the clearance varies greatly	5 years from the effective date of this edition of the MUTCD
3A.05	Maintaining Minimum Retroreflectivity	Implementation and continued use of a method that is designed to maintain retroreflectivity of longitudinal pavement markings (see Paragraph 1 of Section 3A.05)	September 6, 2026
8B.16	High-Profile Grade Crossings	Paragraphs 3 and 7 - Recommended installation of Low Ground Clearance and/or Vehicle Exclusion signs and detour signs for vehicles with low ground clearances that might hang up on high-profile grade crossings at locations with a known history	5 years from the effective date of this edition of the MUTCD
8D.09 through 8D.12	Highway Traffic Signals at or Near Grade Crossings	Assessment and determination of appropriate treatment to achieve compliance (preemption, movement prohibition, pre-signals, queue cutter signals)	10 years from the effective date of this edition of the MUTCD

Compliance Dates for State and Federally Funded Transportation Projects in Vermont

Municipal projects funded with state or federal transportation funds, i.e., bridges, roads, trails, paths and sidewalks, stormwater, etc., must comply as follows:

- Projects advertised prior to October 1, 2025, with substantial completion prior to January 18, 2026:** These projects may conform to either the 2009 MUTCD or the 11th edition. Projects designed to conform to the 11th Edition would need to provide detail in project plans and special provisions until such time as standard drawings and standard specifications have been updated.
- Projects advertised prior to October 1, 2025, with substantial completion on or after January 18, 2026:** These projects may conform to either the 2009 MUTCD or the 11th Edition. When practical, project specific plans and special provisions will conform to the 11th Edition prior to advertisement. For multi-year projects already under contract, and those that cannot feasibly be revised prior to advertisement, the design engineer may review and identify changes needed to conform to the 11th Edition which may be discussed with the Engineer for potential change order and implementation as deemed appropriate.

- **Projects advertised on or after October 1, 2025:** These projects shall be designed in conformance with the 11th Edition. These projects will incorporate updated standard drawings and standard specifications prior to advertisement which will be available by July 1, 2025.

When the MUTCD is Incorporated by Reference

The MUTCD often is incorporated into contracts by reference. Per Section 101.04 of the 2024 Standard Specifications for Construction, when the MUTCD is incorporated by reference and the material covered is not covered by the Standard Specifications or Special Provisions, the reference shall be to the latest revision in effect on the date of advertisement, unless otherwise specified. For example, the MUTCD is often incorporated by reference as it relates to contractor-developed traffic control plans. When that is the case, contractor-developed traffic control plans shall conform to the 11th Edition, unless otherwise specified in the contract.

State Highway Access and Work Permits (1111 Permits)

Work performed within rights-of-way owned by VTrans, including installation and maintenance of utility facilities and construction and maintenance of commercial accesses to property adjacent to the rights-of-way, must have a State Highway Access and Work Permit, commonly known as an 1111 Permit. These projects also must conform to the MUTCD.

- Must conform to the MUTCD in effect at the time of construction.
 - Until January 18, 2026, may conform to 2009 MUTCD or the 11th Edition.
 - After January 18, 2026, must conform with 11th Edition.
- Permitted work may remain in place for its useful service life but must be replaced with a compliant device.

A redline markup showing all changes from the 2009 MUTCD is available at

<https://www.regulations.gov/document/FHWA-2020-0001-17273>.

The Standard Highway Signs Manual that corresponds to the 11th Edition is being released in phases as updates occur. For updates go to mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/kno-shs_2024-release-status/index.htm.