



Department
for Transport

From the Secretary of State
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Dear Chief Executive,

Distances on Traffic Signs

I am writing to remind you that distances shown on traffic signs on public highways in Great Britain must be in imperial units, i.e. miles, miles and yards, or yards. Metric units are not permitted as a measurement of distance.

The prescribed expressions to indicate distances on traffic signs are set out in Schedule 18 Part 3 of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016, available at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2016/362/contents/made>

When the regulations were updated in 2016, my Department published complementary guidance in *DfT Circular 01/2016 The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016*. This restates the position that distances must be indicated in imperial units. The Circular is available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/523916/DfT-circular-01-2016.pdf

Further guidance on traffic sign design is provided in Chapter 7 of *The Traffic Signs Manual*. This has recently been updated, and can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traffic-signs-manual>

I would also like to remind you that as a traffic authority you are responsible for ensuring that traffic signs you erect on your road network comply with legislation. The use of non-prescribed signs on public highways without authorisation might be deemed unlawful, with authorities using them acting beyond their powers. The erection of an unauthorised sign in the highway is an obstruction and the possible consequences of erecting or permitting the erection of obstructions can be severe.

Those responsible could lay themselves open to a claim for damages, for example if an obstruction is the cause of an accident or an injury in a collision, or if it adversely affects a property adjacent to the road by blocking light or impairing visual amenity. Furthermore, the use of unlawful traffic signs might compromise enforcement of statutory provisions and be detrimental to road safety.

Please direct any queries about this to our enquiry inbox at traffic.signs@dft.gov.uk.

W.L. best wishes
C

Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT