



20mph Signage

Introduction

In March 2018, Edinburgh became Scotland's first city to implement a city-wide network of roads with a 20mph speed limit. Slower speeds bring many benefits to places and people. They help to reduce the risk and severity of collisions, encourage people to walk and cycle and spend more time in an area.

Legislation

The signage requirements for enforceable 20mph zones are set out in the [Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions \(TSRGD\)](#). This is national legislation made by the Secretary of State in consultation with Scottish Ministers in accordance with the Scotland Act 1998. They set out the design and conditions of use of official traffic signs that can be lawfully placed on or near roads in Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) and the Isle of Man. Since the introduction of the TSRGD in the 1960s, there have been several revisions and reissues to introduce new signage rules and features reflecting changes in road operations. The current edition of the regulations came into force on 22 April 2016. This edition provides the legal framework for the Edinburgh citywide rollout.

Further guidance and clarification is contained in DfT Circular 01/2016 The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 May 2016 V2.

Signage design guidance

Prior to the launch of the citywide 20mph programme in July 2016, around 50% of Edinburgh's streets were already in 20mph zones. Under the legislation at the time of their designation, these required physical traffic calming features such as speed humps/cushions, road narrowing and other measures. These zones were signed at entry/exit points, with the physical features spaced at the required distance to establish enforceability. Such zones are expensive and disruptive to install.

Legislative changes amended the definition of a traffic calming feature to include a sign or road marking (roundel) rather than engineered or physical features (although there must be at least one physical feature within a zone – this can include, for example, a bend no less than 70° within a defined distance).

Under the TSRGD 2016, the new 20mph zones can be implemented with few physical traffic calming features. The zones require entry/exit signs accompanied by a traffic calming feature or repeater signage at maximum spacing of 100m, the regulations requiring a feature within 50m of any point on the road.

The signage design approach adopted seeks to avoid any unnecessary signs and roundels, whilst at the same time introducing a scheme which is safe, legally enforceable and compliant with the Regulations, and understandable to road users. The first option is to attach repeater signs to existing lampposts or other street furniture as either single or double sided repeaters.

Where this is not practical, the next option is to place a speed limit roundel on the road. New poles for repeater signage are only used as a last resort or for instance to accommodate school warning signs where no other appropriately located furniture is available.

Typical example of street furniture used:



New entry/exit signs require stronger supports due to the sign size and typically do require new poles. The revised regulations allow the use of a single exit/entry sign rather than a pair on either side, but Circular 01/2016 stresses this must be assessed by the local authority on a case-by-case basis; consequently signs may be paired where the characteristics of the entry/exit require it – for instance on a wide road to ensure visibility.

The signage design criteria followed guidance from the Streetscape Working Group not to place roundels on setted streets where at all possible to avoid visual impact on the historical character of the street. This resulted in a small number of instances in the New Town (due to the absence of suitable existing street furniture) where new poles were erected to provide essential repeater signage. However, after concerns were raised by residents, further discussions and site meetings were held with members of the Streetscape Working Group and the decision taken to reverse this requirement. Consequently, where previous “decluttering” has removed street furniture, the use of roundels (to replace pole mounted repeaters) on setted streets in the New Town is now permitted.

At gateways (points where speed limits change), entry/exit signs are placed as near as practical to the point at which a speed limit starts/ends. 20mph speed limit roundels accompany these on the carriageway for traffic entering the 20mph zone and, in some specific cases – for instance at the point where the new 20mph speed limit is introduced on a principal ‘A’ road, or where another high traffic volume road joins – speed limit roundels for the speed limit adjacent to the 20mph zone are also used.

Typical zone entrance



Buffer zones

On roads where a 20mph zone falls next to a speed limit above 40mph, a short buffer zone will be required

Removal of part time 20mph speed limits outside schools

Where an existing part time 20mph limit becomes incorporated into a new full time 20mph area, different signage is required to comply with the TSRGD. Consequently, the signs with flashing lights outside schools signalling the lower speed limit on stretches of 30mph roads have to be removed as the part time speed limits will no longer be in operation. In their place, new signage as shown in the diagram below will be erected.



Declutter

The 20mph roll out seeks to “declutter” wherever possible to remove unnecessary street furniture such as traffic calmed area signs.

As previously noted, a large number of streets in the city are already in 20mph zones designated under previous editions of the TSRGD. As such, there is limited or no signage as there are physical traffic calming features in place.