



SOUTHERN AFRICAN  
DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

# ROAD TRAFFIC SIGNS MANUAL

3rd Edition

## VOLUME 1 UNIFORM TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES

**DIGITISED VERSION – May 2012**



Technically approved by the  
Southern Africa Transport and Communications Commission (SATCC) Committee  
on Roads, Road Transport and Road Traffic in March 1999

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF, WE**, the Ministers of Transport and Road Traffic affairs have signed this Manual.

**DONE AT** ....., on this ..... Day of ....., 1999.

For and on behalf of the Republic of Angola	
For and on behalf of the Republic of Botswana	
For and on behalf of the Democratic Republic of Congo	
For and on behalf of the Kingdom of Lesotho	
For and on behalf of the Republic of Malawi	
For and on behalf of the Republic of Mauritius	
For and on behalf of the Republic of Mozambique	
For and on behalf of the Republic of Namibia	
For and on behalf of the Republic of Seychelles	
For and on behalf of the Republic of South Africa	
For and on behalf of the Kingdom of Swaziland	
For and on behalf of the United Republic of Tanzania	
For and on behalf of the Republic of Zambia	
For and on behalf of the Republic of Zimbabwe	

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## PREFACE

Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states decided, at their meeting in Lusaka in June 1995, to enter into a Protocol Agreement to expand and deepen their co-operation in the areas of infrastructure and services. An important component of this Protocol Agreement is the intention to harmonize road traffic signs and their supporting regulations throughout member states.

South Africa offered to undertake the work required for this harmonization process. The first phase of the work involved an assessment of any differences existing between the current systems, as documented in the Southern Africa Transport and Communications Commission (SATCC) Road Traffic Signs Manual, published in November 1990, and the South African Road Traffic Signs Manual, published in January 1993. This assessment showed that the two systems are very similar, both being based on the European road traffic sign system. The South African system, having recently been developed to conform to European signing principles, but also to satisfy African requirements, contained a significantly greater number of road traffic sign types. These findings were considered by SATCC in September 1995. The Commission appointed a sub-committee comprising members from Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia and South Africa to monitor the work of the South African team in the preparation of the new harmonized Manual and model road traffic sign regulations.

This Third Edition of the SADC Road Traffic Signs Manual is structured to ultimately appear in four volumes. However at present, at the request of the sub-committee, only Volumes 1 and 4 have been prepared. A decision will be taken in the future on the need to adapt Volumes 2 and 3 of the South African Manual to SADC requirements.

Volume 1 of the Manual contains detailed signing policy and design principles. The text covering each sign, marking and signal starts with a statement regarding the meaning, or

significance, of the device. These statements are essentially the same as those given in the harmonized model road traffic sign regulations, prepared at the same time as Volume 1. The content of Volume 1 provides an in depth description of the road traffic sign system and working detail on the use of each individual component of the system.

Volume 2, if required, will deal with the collective application of signs, markings, and signals for specific subject areas such as traffic accommodation at roadworks, tourism signing, public transport signing and signing for the control of heavy vehicles.

Volume 3, if required, will provide in depth detail on the selection, installation, operation and control methods for traffic signals.

Volume 4 gives complete dimensional details, together with accurate scalable drawings, of all signs, markings and signals, including details of all letter types used on direction signs.

Absolute harmonization of all aspects of the previous road traffic signs systems is not possible for a number of reasons. In order to accommodate specific needs of member states several chapters in Volume 1 have a final section dealing with what have been termed "national variants". Typical examples of "national variants" are:

- (i) "mirror" image signs for use in states where vehicles are required to travel on the right hand side of the road;
- (ii) examples of standard text signs in Portuguese - this type of sign has been kept to an absolute minimum by a strong reliance on the use of pictographs or symbols, inherited from the South African system;
- (iii) provision for specific member state symbols for such facilities as police services, national monuments etc.

In addition, several significant differences have been noted between the two traffic signal systems as documented in the manuals existing prior to harmonization. The cost implications of total harmonization of the traffic signal systems have been considered unaffordable. Volume 1, Chapter 6: Traffic Signals, therefore covers the differences between the two systems in parallel. One system, considered to be used by a majority of member states, is recommended, and the other system is recorded as an alternative system.

Typical of these differences are:

- (i) in the recommended system the primary traffic signals are positioned on the far side of junctions, whilst in the alternative system the primary traffic signals are positioned on the near side of the junction;
- (ii) in the recommended system the basic traffic signal sequence is red, green, yellow, red, whereas in the alternative system the basic traffic signal sequence is red, red plus yellow, green, yellow, red.

Due to the size of the Manual, the cost of printing all pages in full colour would have been considerable. To minimise this cost all colour pages have been concentrated at the beginning of each relevant chapter in Volume 1. In this way the whole sign system and each individual sign, marking and signal is illustrated in colour. A reference is also given in these sections to where each individual sign, marking and signal is dealt with in detail in Volume 1, and to where they are dimensioned in Volume 4. Throughout the rest of Volumes 1 and 4 a coded form of black and white shading is used to represent the sign colours.

Finally, acknowledgements are due to the members of the various committees whose work has led to the publication of this Manual, to South Africa for funding the work, and to the Chief Directorate: Roads in the South African Department of Transport for making this possible

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**CONTENTS:**

	<b>Page Numbers</b>
List of Contents	0.1.1 – 0.1.2
<b>CHAPTER 1: GENERAL PRINCIPLES</b>	
Introduction	1.1.1 – 1.1.9
Road Classification	1.2.1 – 1.2.2
Road Traffic Sign Classification	1.3.1 – 1.3.5
Shape, Size and Colour	1.4.1 – 1.4.8
Specification and Manufacture	1.5.1 – 1.5.7
Sign Placement	1.6.1 – 1.6.12
Human Factors	1.7.1 – 1.7.5
Positive Guidance	1.8.1 – 1.8.5
Outdoor Advertising	1.9.1 – 1.9.2
Road Traffic Sign Maintenance	1.10.1 – 1.10.3
Road Traffic Sign Management Systems	1.11.1 – 1.11.2
<b>CHAPTER 2: REGULATORY SIGNS</b>	
Contents (with all regulatory signs in colour)	2.0.1 – 2.0.21
Introduction	2.1.1 – 2.1.7
Control Signs	2.2.1 – 2.2.14
Command Signs	2.3.1 – 2.3.18
Prohibition Signs	2.4.1 – 2.4.22
Reservation Signs	2.5.1 – 2.5.23
Comprehensive Signs	2.6.1 – 2.6.3
Selective Restriction Signs	2.7.1 – 2.7.14
Regulatory Sign Combinations	2.8.1 – 2.8.6
De-Restriction Signs	2.9.1
National Variants	2.10.1 – 2.10.4
<b>CHAPTER 3: WARNING SIGNS</b>	
Contents (with all warning signs in colour)	3.0.1 – 3.0.8
Introduction	3.1.1 – 3.1.4
Road Layout Signs	3.2.1 – 3.2.4
Direction of Movement Signs	3.3.1 – 3.3.6
Symbolic Signs	3.4.1 – 3.4.27
Hazard Marker Signs	3.5.1 – 3.5.9
Warning Sign Combinations	3.6.1 – 3.6.6
National Variants	3.7.1 – 3.7.3
<b>CHAPTER 4: GUIDANCE SIGNS</b>	
Contents (with all guidance signs and symbols in colour)	4.0.1 – 4.0.43
Introduction	4.1.1 – 4.1.8
Arrows	4.2.1 – 4.2.12
Legend	4.3.1 – 4.3.15
Determination of Letter Size	4.4.1 – 4.4.17
Urban Guidance Signing	4.5.1 – 4.5.21
Location Signs	4.6.1 – 4.6.9
Route Marker Signs	4.7.1 – 4.7.17
Direction Signs	4.8.1 – 4.8.20
Freeway Direction Signs	4.9.1 – 4.9.43
Tourism Signs	4.10.1 – 4.10.37
Local Direction Signs	4.11.1 – 4.11.17
Diagrammatic Signs	4.12.1 – 4.12.35
Pedestrian Signs	4.13.1 – 4.13.9
Toll Route Signs	4.14.1 – 4.14.16
National Variants	4.15.1 – 4.15.3

<b>CHAPTER 5: INFORMATION SIGNS</b>	<b>Page Numbers</b>
Contents (with all information signs in colour)	5.0.1 - 5.0.5
Introduction	5.1.1 – 5.1.2
Signs	5.2.1 – 5.2.10
National Variants	5.3.1 – 5.3.2
 <b>CHAPTER 6: TRAFFIC SIGNALS</b>	
Introduction	6.1.1 – 6.1.4
Vehicular Traffic Signals at Junctions and Crossings	6.2.1 – 6.2.14
Pedestrian and Pedal Cyclist Signals	6.3.1 – 6.3.3
Traffic Signals to Control Individual Vehicles	6.4.1
Lane Direction Control Signals	6.5.1 – 6.5.2
Flashing Red Disc Light Signal at Railway Crossings	6.6.1 – 6.6.2
Hand and Other Signals	6.7.1 – 6.7.3
 <b>CHAPTER 7: ROAD MARKINGS</b>	
Contents	7.0.1 – 7.0.9
Introduction	7.1.1 – 7.1.10
Regulatory Markings	7.2.1 – 7.2.31
Warning Markings	7.3.1 – 7.3.9
Guidance Markings	7.4.1 – 7.4.6
Roadstuds	7.5.1 – 7.5.5
Other Delineation Devices	7.6.1 – 7.6.3
National Variants	7.7.1 – 7.7.2
 <b>CHAPTER 8: NAVIGATIONAL AIDS</b>	
Introduction	8.1.1 – 8.1.4
Types of Navigational Aid	8.3.1 – 8.3.2
Route Optimisation	8.4.1 – 8.4.3
Route Numbering	8.5.1 – 8.5.4
Selection of Destinations	8.6.1 – 8.6.11
National Variants	
 <b>CHAPTER 9: VARIABLE MESSAGE SIGNS</b>	
Introduction	9.1.1 – 9.1.19
Dimensions	9.2.1 – 9.2.2
 <b>CHAPTER 10: GLOSSARY</b>	
Introduction	10.1.1
General Terms	10.2.1 – 10.2.8
Road Sign Terms	10.3.1 – 10.3.6
Traffic Signal Terms	10.4.1 – 10.4.3
Road marking Terms	10.5.1 – 10.5.3
Tourism Signing Terms	10.6.1 – 10.6.4
 <b>CHAPTER 11: INDEX</b>	
General Index	11.1.1 – 11.1.23
List of Figures	11.2.1 – 11.2.5
List of Tables	11.3.1 – 11.3.2