

	<b>BILINGUAL SIGNS</b>		<i>Issued: DEC 2003</i>
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<b>RECOMMENDED PRACTICES</b>	PART	HIGHWAY SIGNS	
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## General

In Canada, the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCDC) provides general guidelines on the use of bilingual signs. Jurisdictions have the authority to decide in which situations and how bilingual signs are installed.

Based on the MUTCDC, a road authority may:

- 1) exclusively use English language on all signs using text-messages, or
- 2) adopt a policy of using bilingual signs where considered beneficial and safe to road users. The national standards in the MUTCDC support the Canadian multicultural policy, which recognizes English and French as the only two official languages for Canada.

Any major departure from this national standard (i.e., use of an unofficial language on any traffic signs) may have serious implications in terms of safety and traffic operations as well as legal implications.

If motorists can not understand a message provided on a traffic sign, they may become confused and may not respond adequately to a traffic situation. As a result, a road authority that placed a non-conforming sign may be held liable for failing to provide clear and consistent messages.

The Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation (AIT) has jurisdiction over the provincial highway network and has the authority to establish policies regarding the use of bilingual signs along a highway.

## Policy on Use of Bilingual Signs in Alberta

Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation supports the exclusive use of the English language on all traffic signs except where permitted under the following clauses.

All traffic signs in Alberta:

- 1) shall except as permitted under clauses (2) and (3) exclusively use the English language.
- 2) may, upon receiving an approval from Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation, display bilingual messages (i.e., in English and French) on Street Name signs.
- 3) may, if serving National Parks and Historic Sites, display bilingual messages (i.e., in English and French) on guide and facility signs.

All text messages (i.e., in English or in English and French) used on any traffic signs shall conform to the provincial standards for the design of traffic signs or in the absence of the provincial standards, to the MUTCDC standards.