SLOW ZONES

(F 403)

A Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport Advice note to Local Authorities in the use of the Slow Zone Sign
Traffic Signs Advice Note: Slow Zones

Document Control Sheet

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this advice note is to provide guidance to Local Authority staff in the use/employment of the Slow Zone sign. This advice note also provides mock-up photographic illustrations of the appropriate use of this sign.

WHAT IS THE SLOW ZONE SIGN?

The Slow Zone Sign is a sign to be used in housing estates where a 30 km/h speed limit is being applied and a slow zone is being created.

WHY WAS THIS SIGN INTRODUCED?

This sign was introduced to supplement a 30 km/h speed limit applied to housing estate areas, to reduce incident severity and enhance quality of life.

WHAT DOES THE SLOW ZONE SIGN LOOK LIKE?

See page 2 of this Advice Note

WHERE SHOULD THIS SIGN BE USED?

This sign should be used at entry points to housing estates where a 30 km/h speed limit is being implemented and a ‘Slow Zone’ is being created.

EXAMPLE OF ITS USE

See page 4 of this advice Note

SIGN SPECIFICATIONS

See page 7 of this Advice Note
PURPOSE:

The purpose of this advice note is to provide guidance to Local Authority staff in the use/employment of the Slow Zone sign. This advice note also provides mock-up photographic illustrations of the appropriate use of this sign.

WHAT IS THE SLOW ZONE SIGN?

The Slow Zone Sign, introduced in the Guidelines for Setting and Managing Speed Limits in Ireland (March 2015 Edition), and launched by the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport on 19th March 2015, is a sign to be used in housing estates where a 30 km/h speed limit is being applied and a slow zone is being created.

WHY WAS THIS SIGN INTRODUCED?

This sign was introduced to supplement a 30 km/h speed limit and should be used in housing estate areas where there is a high level of vulnerable road users and their needs are deemed to take precedence over those of motorists. Slow Zones should be developed to reduce the speed limit to 30 km/h and to change driver behaviour.

The ultimate goal of a ‘Slow Zone’ is to lower the incidence and severity of crashes and to enhance quality of life.

WHAT DOES THE SLOW ZONE SIGN LOOK LIKE?

The Slow Zone sign is a combination sign made up of the following;

- [Image of the Slow Zone sign]
- [Image of the 30 km/h sign]
- [Image of the Crios Mall SLOW ZONE sign]
WHERE SHOULD THIS SIGN BE USED?

This sign should be used at entry points to housing estates where a 30 km/h speed limit is being implemented and a ‘Slow Zone’ is being created. There is no standard definition of what constitutes a housing estate. It can however be considered to be a self-contained grouping of houses with single or multiple entry points for vehicles. In addition, such areas often have green areas or play areas within them. ‘Slow Zones’ should be developed and implemented as a Local Authority supported community based approach to reduce the speed limit to 30 km/h and to add safety measures within a select area in order to change driver behaviour. The ultimate goal of a ‘Slow Zone’ is to lower the incidence and severity of crashes and to enhance quality of life.

‘Slow Zones’ should be established in self-contained areas that consist of Local Roads.

The combination sign should be erected on the left hand side on entry to the ‘Slow Zone’ (housing estate area). Signage on the right hand side of the entry is not normally required. Traffic calming measures should be installed in the slow zone, and before and after speed measurement surveys should be taken to monitor the effectiveness of the installations.

The zone itself should be a self-enforcing, reduced-speed area with speed bumps, markings or other traffic calming treatments as required. Slow Zones should be implemented in areas with low traffic volumes and minimal through-traffic. Local Authorities should also distinguish between roads within housing estates as follows;

- Through roads within estates – which have very little direct frontage housing and are not immediately adjacent to play areas. These roads would generally have a speed limit of 50 km/h but may be reduced where the road authority deems it to be appropriate.

- Roads with direct frontage housing – or immediately adjacent to play areas, should have speed limits of 30 km/h.

When leaving ‘Slow Zones,’ appropriate speed limit signs should be posted on the reverse side of the entry signage. For exits to high speed roads, i.e. where the speed limit is greater than 60 km/h, appropriate warning signs also need to be considered.

In addition to the above and where a speed limit of 30 km/h is being implemented Local Authorities and community groups should consider the implementation of ‘Slow Zones’. ‘Slow Zones’ should be developed and implemented as a Local Authority supported community based approach to reduce the speed limit to 30 km/h and to add safety measures within a select area in order to change driver behaviour. The ultimate goal of a ‘Slow Zone’ is to lower the incidence and severity of crashes and to enhance quality of life.

‘Slow Zones’ should be established in self-contained areas that consist of Local Roads. Gateways should announce the entry and exit from a ‘Slow Zone’. These are a set of signs and markings at an intersection to alert drivers to the reduced speed limit. The zone itself should be self-enforcing, reduced-speed area with speed bumps, markings or other traffic calming treatments as required. Slow Zones should be implemented in areas with low traffic volumes and minimal through traffic.
Once the signs are in place Local Authorities should seek to identify if the new speed limits are being observed. Temporary in-situ or portable speed measurement devices can be used by Authorities to collect the required information. Where measures used are not sufficient to achieve an 85th percentile speed of 30 km/h then further measures should be considered and implemented to achieve the necessary reduction. Suitable measures for consideration include:

- Closure of a through road to traffic by way of a road closure at a particular point with continued through access for pedestrians and cyclists. A network level analysis should be considered to ensure that problems do not arise elsewhere.
- Entry treatment
- Build outs and/or increased on-street parking
- Pinch points
- Chicane
- Ramps or speed cushions
- Speed tables

*It should be noted that where a housing estate does not meet the Slow Zone threshold Warning Sign W 142 may still be used.*
EXAMPLE OF ITS USE

View of Entry – Sign to be erected on Left Hand Side
Note: In this example a speed ramp has already been installed. The Slow Zone sign is not intended as a replacement of the ramps warning sign, it is merely suggested in this example that the Slow Zone sign be erected in this location with consideration also to be given to erecting a ramps warning sign in another appropriate location.
View of Exit – Speed Limit Sign to be erected on back of combination sign

Above – Before

Note: This is a line of bitumen sealant, not a line marking

Above - After
SIGN SPECIFICATIONS

(F 403)

Panel Detail
- Text: Black
- Background: Yellow
- Border: Black
- ‘x’ Height: 40.0mm
- Width: 450mm
- Height: 325mm
- Area: 0.15sq.m

RUS 044
450mm Roundel

Panel Detail
- Text: Black
- Background: White
- Border: Black
- ‘x’ Height: 40.0mm
- Width: 450mm
- Height: 240mm
- Area: 0.11sq.m

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NOTE Edge of sign must be at least 750 mm from edge of carriageway
APPENDIX 1

PLACEMENT

1.3.15 The placement of a sign is its position on the cross-section of the road. A sign should be placed so as to maintain a clearance between itself and the traffic on the carriageway.

1.3.16 A horizontal clearance between the edge of the sign and the edge of the pavement (including any hard strip or hard shoulder) of 1200mm is recommended. However, where space is limited, or there are other obstructions or constraints, the clearance may be reduced to 450mm in urban areas and 600mm in rural areas.

1.3.17 In urban areas the obstruction caused by posts located in narrow pedestrian footways should be minimised. Every effort should be made to ensure that the poles do not impede the free movement of vision or mobility impaired people, the elderly, people with pushchairs or small children, or wheelchair users. The following guidelines apply:

- Street furniture should be carefully and consistently located so as not to impede the walking area. Supports should be at the back of the footway or as close to the kerb as practicable (see Figure 1.20);
- Street furniture should be kept to a minimum;
- Street furniture should have rounded edges;
- When at low level street furniture should be detectable to assist long cane users;
- Where difficulties in placement arise, the local authority should liaise with affected local parties.

1.3.20 When designing and locating signage for cycle facilities, the designer should refer to any guidelines for cycling facilities issued by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.
MOUNTING HEIGHT

1.3.21 Signs in rural areas should normally be erected with the lower edge of the sign or supplementary plate at the greater of 1500mm above the level of the adjacent paved surface and 1000mm above ground level below the sign. Signs should be mounted clear of any vegetation.

1.3.22 In urban areas or locations where pedestrians are likely to walk under the sign, the desirable mounting height is 2300mm. Where cyclists are likely to pass under the sign, the desirable mounting height is 2500mm. See Figure 1.22.

1.3.23 Low-level direction signs at roundabouts and junctions may be mounted at lower heights, but not less than 750mm above ground level. However, care must be taken to ensure that the signs do not obstruct sight lines.

1.3.24 In city centres where congested conditions prevail, higher mounting heights may be required if standing vehicles consistently prevent signs from being seen. Alternatively cantilever signs or gantries may need to be considered.

1.3.25 If signs are erected on structures, mounting heights less than 2300mm may be used, provided that the signs can still be seen, do not obstruct pedestrians and are out of the range of spray thrown up by passing vehicles.

6.16 Road Surface

HUMP OR DEPRESSION

6.16.1 Where there is an individual sharp rise or depression in the road surface, Sign W 130, Road Hump, or Sign W 131, Road Depression, should be provided as appropriate.

6.16.2 Sign W 130 should also be provided at the start of a road where road humps have been introduced as a traffic calming measure. The sign should not normally be required on a road with a 30km/h speed limit.