

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000
ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION REGULATIONS 2004**

Your request for information has now been considered and the Council's response to your questions is shown below.

You asked:

The government's Traffic Signs Manual provides advice on road signage to assist local authorities in the discharge of their duties under section 122 of the the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and Part 2 of the Traffic Management Act 2004. This states that "...failure to follow the Manual's guidance without good reason might well lead to enforcement difficulties. In particular, adjudicators might consider such failure to be evidence that the signing was unclear. Traffic authorities should always remember that the purpose of regulatory signs is to ensure that drivers clearly understand what restrictions or prohibitions are in force."

Is the Council aware that the Traffic Signs Manual strongly recommends that all warning and regulatory signs displaying height, width and length restrictions should show the restriction dimensions in metres as well as imperial units?

ANSWER

Q1: The Council's Traffic Signing Officer is aware of the advice given in the Traffic Signs Manual (TSM)

Imperial units for height, width and length dimensions are the standard on UK highways. The Traffic Signs Regulations & General Directions 2002 (TSRGD) specifies the mandatory use of imperial units on traffic signs but allows the use of metric units alongside the imperial. There is no mandatory requirement to use additional metric units for height, width and length.

2. It is not correct that the TSM "strongly" recommends that 'all warning and regulatory signs displaying height, width and length restrictions should show the restriction dimensions in metres as well as imperial units'.

TSM Chapter 3 (2008) covers regulatory signing. Where Ch.3 covers height, width and length restrictions it does recommend that both imperial and metric units are used, but the term 'strongly' is not used.

TSM Chapter 4 (2004) covers warning signs. Ch.4 only advises on the warning of height. Where it does it recommends the use of metric units alongside imperial on 'main routes'. The term 'strongly' is not used.

TSM Chapter 4 (2013) was released by the DfT the week your request was received (30th July). It still only advises on the warning of height. However, it does now include the term 'strongly recommends' in the use of metric alongside imperial units.

So, the TSM only 'strongly recommends' the use of metric units on the warning of limited height clearances, and has only done so for four days. That is not sufficient time for local traffic authorities to respond to this new advice.

3. All height, width and length restriction and warning signs conformed to the TSRGD current at the time of installation. Some of the traffic signs have been in service for over 40 years.

2. At which locations on the authority's road network does height, width or length signage remain which does not meet the recommendations of the Traffic Signs Manual to include dimensions in metres?

Q2: The Council do not have details of where height, width and length restrictions and warnings are only displayed in imperial units.

1. The Council do have a record of where height, width and length restriction and warnings signs are located, but not the units used and they are all lit.

2. A survey would have to be undertaken to establish which locations are imperial only. This survey would take 65 man hours to complete.

3. What plans does the Council have to bring its height, width and length signage into conformity with the guidance within the Traffic Signs Manual?

Q3: The Council have not yet established any plans to change height dimensions in line with the new advice included in TSM Ch.4 (2013).

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