

Stock on Road signs

Operational Instruction 2.7

March 2025



Government of South Australia
Department for Infrastructure
and Transport

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Country throughout South Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land and waters. We pay our respects to the diversity of cultures, significance of contributions and to Elders past, present and emerging.



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1 Introduction

This document provides guidance on the use of both temporary and permanent stock warning signs on roads under the care and control of the Department for Infrastructure and Transport (the Department). This document was formerly titled “Guidelines for using Stock on Road Signs”.

This document shall be read in conjunction with Australian Standard *AS 1742.2 Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices Part 2: Traffic Control Devices for General Use (2022)*, Clause 4.11.5. Councils may also refer to this document for guidance on the use of these signs on their roads.

The general reference to Stockowners throughout this document refers to all persons responsible for or involved in controlling the movement of stock along or across roads. The use of temporary signs by any persons for the purpose of moving livestock along or across a road is permitted under Government Gazettal, August 2000 No.136, “*Notice of Approval from the Minister for Transport and Urban Planning - Approval under Section 17(3) Road Traffic Act*”:

https://www.governmentgazette.sa.gov.au/2000/August/2000_136.pdf.

Permanent signs in accordance with this Operational Instruction may be installed under the Minister’s *Instrument of General Approval and Delegation to Council*, or the *Instrument of Authorisation and Delegation* to the Department’s Network Management Services. Traffic control devices which vary from this document require the separate approval of the Manager, Traffic Services for each location prior to installation.

2 Background

While there is no regulatory requirement under the *Road Traffic Act 1961* to use signs when moving stock, Stockowners have a duty of care, both under common law and under the *Civil Liability Act 1936*, to warn others of potential hazards due to the movement of animals under their control. The use of signs by Stockowners can be seen as taking reasonable steps towards warning other road users of the hazard.

The *Highways Act* prohibits the movement of stock along or across controlled access roads, except where transported by a motor vehicle.

Permanent signs shall only be installed where daily stock movements occur, or where stock is likely to be present along unfenced road reserves.

Both the temporary and permanent signs are only intended to warn drivers of the likelihood of stock being on the road. They do not impose any legal requirement on drivers, nor do they provide full protection to Stockowners under the law of negligence.

3 Temporary warning signs

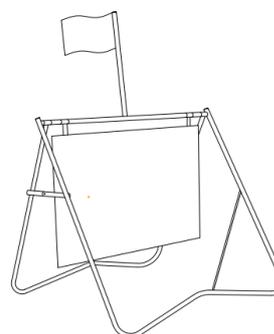
Stockowners are to be encouraged to use temporary warning signs when stock is being moved in a controlled manner along or across the Department’s roads. If stock is moved across a section of road on

a daily basis consideration shall be given to installing permanent warning signs as discussed in Section 5 of this document.

An orange flag of approximately 450 mm x 300 mm may also be used to improve the visibility of the signs. However, the use of a flag with the sign is not compulsory.



TES 6396



Suggested roadside arrangement with orange flag
(450mm x 300mm)

NOTE: Some Stockowners may be using a STOCK ON ROAD sign with a yellow background which was an older Department standard. These signs may continue to be used but any new or replacement sign should be the fluorescent orange signs as shown in drawing TES 6396:

<https://signindex.dit.sa.gov.au/assets/signs/pdf/1231.pdf>

The signs and stands are to be supplied by the Stockowner. Fixing temporary signs to guide posts shall be permitted, but the stock on road sign should not be fixed to other road signs. Homemade stands for signs are acceptable but it is preferable for the signs to be commercially manufactured.

3.1 Guidelines for using temporary signs

Consistency, both in appearance and in use throughout the state is important so that drivers can reliably expect to encounter stock on, or near the road when faced with these signs. Circumstances where drivers do not encounter stock within a reasonable distance after passing a stock on road sign may lead to a lack of respect or acknowledgment of the warning message in the future.

The general guidelines for use are:

- a) Signs should only be used while stock is about to enter or is on the road reserve. They should not be left on the road on a permanent basis and need to be removed within a reasonable time of stock leaving the roadway.
- b) Signs are not suitable for use at night. For road safety reasons stock should not be allowed to remain on the road reserve during periods of darkness or other times of poor visibility.
- c) Signs should be placed on the shoulder. They may be temporarily fixed to a rigid guide post but should not be fixed to other road signs. If sign stands are used, they must be capable of remaining upright and in place in windy and heavy traffic conditions.
- d) Signs must not be permanently installed with a temporary cover. They must give the appearance of a temporary installation. Removal of unauthorised signs of this nature can be undertaken under Section 31 of the *Road Traffic Act*.

- e) Signs should be visible to drivers over an approach distance of 80 m up to 250 m (depending on the approach speed) in advance of the stock crossing, stock location or property access gate. Refer to Table 5.1
- f) When droving stock along the roadside, the signs should never be more than 5 km in advance of the stock's location. This will require signs to be moved with the stock if the droving distance is greater.
- g) Signs should not be mounted on a vehicle. However, where stock is being moved along the road and may not always be visible to a driver passing the roadside Stock on Road sign, a sign may be temporarily placed on a vehicle in addition to the roadside signs. It is important that any sign placed on a vehicle is only visible to drivers prior to them encountering stock on the road.
- h) Signs will need to be regularly maintained and cleaned by the Stockowner.

Stockowners involved in moving stock on a road may advise drivers to travel through or around stock in addition to advising drivers of the likely behaviour of the animals around traffic. However, under the *Road Traffic Act*, Stockowners are not permitted to control traffic by instructing drivers to stop, proceed or otherwise direct the path of the vehicle.

Drivers are expected to proceed safely past stock using their own judgement in addition to any advice received from the Stockowner.

Other types of signs (eg stop/slow bats or warning signs), other than the Stock on Road sign shall not be used in conjunction with stock movement.

3.2 Role of the Department

The Department is available to provide advice to stockowners on the use of temporary warning signs however the Department is not required to assess, inspect, or keep records of crossing locations. The Department provides an information and advisory role to Stockowners seeking advice on the use of the temporary signs, or other stock on road issues, and may assist in undertaking on-site inspections in some circumstances.

4 Use of flashing yellow lights

The *Road Traffic (Light Vehicle Standards) Rules 2018* Division 20 Rule 114 permits the use of yellow flashing lights by Stockowners. If used, the yellow light must be mounted on top of a vehicle and must be visible from all sides. The Regulation allows the lights to be used for a vehicle used in hazardous situations on a road.

Hazard lights fitted to vehicles (as part of the turn indicators) are not considered to be flashing lights. Hazard lights are only to be used when a vehicle is stationary on the road, and it is necessary to warn other road users of the presence of a disabled vehicle or other hazard. They cannot be used as an alternative to a vehicle mounted yellow flashing light for the droving of stock.

The use of yellow flashing lights is not compulsory, and the Department does not have the authority to regulate their use when they are used in accordance with the *Road Traffic Act*.

However, the use of yellow flashing lights should be encouraged where:

- stock is being moved along the road reserve and may not always be clearly visible to a driver passing the stock on road sign,
- vehicles are used to move stock along the road where permanent stock warning signs are installed, or,
- a vehicle is left stationary on the carriageway (i.e. not clear of the shoulder) while the stock is being moved. In this instance the vehicles hazard lights may be used as an alternative to a yellow flashing light.

5 Permanent stock crossing and warning signs

There are generally two scenarios for installing permanent stock warning signs on the Department's roads. They are:

- where there are daily stock movements occurring across, or for short distances, along the road between paddocks, such as would be expected at a dairy (see Section 5.2)
- on an unfenced road where there is potential for wandering stock to be on, or near the road (see Section 5.3).

All other circumstances where stock is travelling on, near or across the road should be treated with the temporary stock on road signs discussed in Section 3.

5.1 Approval for installation of permanent signs

No signs may be installed on roads without the approval of the appropriate road authority. Permanent signs cannot be installed by Stockowners.

In situations where a sign is requested by a Stockowner and the installation of the sign is warranted, the cost of purchasing, installing and maintaining (and possibly future removal) should be the responsibility of the road authority as is the case with other standard warning signs.

5.2 Warning sign for daily stock movements

Where stock movements are occurring daily, permanent stock warning signs may be installed.



W5-38

The Australian Standard (W5-38) Stock warning sign shall be used where a permanent stock warning signs is required south of the dog fence.

The following sign sizes shall be used:

- W5-38B for roads having an 85th percentile speed of less than 90 km/h.
- W5-38C for roads having an 85th percentile speed of 90 km/h or greater.

Where there are a number of crossing locations along a short section of road (less than 1 km), or where stock is required to move along a short section of road between paddocks a supplementary W8-17, "NEXT xx KM" plate may be used in preference to having closely spaced stock warning signs.

The W5-38 sign shall be installed prior to the stock entry and exit points along the road reserve, at a distance shown in Table 5.1.

85 th percentile speed (km/h)	Distance (m)
<75	80 – 120
75 – 90	120 - 180
>90	180 – 250

Table 5.1: Location of warning signs in advance of entry / exit points to the road reserve

5.3 Warning signs for unfenced roads

Roads in remote areas are typically unfenced. Stock and other animals travel great distances for food and water. In view of this, it is very difficult to identify and sign every specific location where stock may be encountered crossing or wandering along a road, and doing so could be counterproductive because it may lead road users to believe that animals may only be expected where such individual signs exist.

Road users are expected to understand that there is a possibility of encountering animals at any time while driving on unfenced roads. Tourists unfamiliar with travelling in the outback are warned in tourist brochures, maps and other information of the dangers of encountering animals on the road.

	<p>The standard STATION NAME, UNFENCED ROAD, WATCH FOR WANDERING ANIMALS sign (TES 15006 or TES 15007) should be provided on the high speed sealed network and on Primary Outback roads. One sign should be placed at the start of the road where it leaves the sealed network, and one at each station boundary change.</p>
<p>TES 15006 [Station Name] Watch for Wandering Animals sign.</p>	<p>NOTE: TES 15007 shows a standard cow only warning symbol and should be used on unfenced roads north of the Dog Fence.</p>
	<p>Smaller signs without the station name (TES 19000 and TES 19001) should be provided at the start of Secondary and Minor Outback roads where they leave the sealed network (or where the unfenced section begins) or a Primary Outback Road.</p>
<p>TES 19000 Watch for Wandering Animals warning sign.</p>	<p>NOTE: TES 19001 shows a standard "cow only" warning symbol and is to be used on unfenced roads north of the Dog Fence.</p>

Where a grid or other feature exists at the boundary, the small 'Station Name' sign (G6-2, refer to DIT Sign Index <https://signindex.dit.sa.gov.au/home>) may be installed.

5.3.1 Repeater warning signs for long sections of unfenced road

Repeater signs may be installed on long sections of unfenced road to remind drivers of the potential of encountering wandering stock.

Repeater signs should not be required if the travel time along the unfenced section of road is less than ½ hour (50-60 km, assuming a speed of 110 km/h, or 40-50 km, assuming a speed of 100 km/h). Where the unfenced section of road exceeds this distance, repeater signs may be placed at an average of ½ hour travel intervals or midway along the unfenced section where it is less than 100 km in length.

 <p>W5-38 and W8-SA102 signs</p>	<p>Additional W5-38 and W8-SA102 unfenced road warning signs may be installed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Within 500 m after a stock grid to remind the driver of the unfenced nature of the road, particularly where boundary fences may give the appearance that the road reserve is returning to a fenced situation. Where road conditions require greater driver attention. For example, undulating and winding roads, less than ideal road surface conditions (unsealed road), or where the number of other road signs and side roads require greater driver effort and attention. In this case repeater signs may be erected at ¼ hour travel time spacing. At locations where stock are likely to cross on a semi-regular basis, for example crossing points used by wandering stock to reach feeding or watering areas. Liaison with Stockowners will be needed to establish these locations. In this instance the W5-38 sign should be installed without the W8-SA102, plate.
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5.4 Assessment of existing stock crossing signs

As part of the Asset Management duties along the Department's roads, permanent warning signs should be continually assessed for their need and relevance, as well as being checked for physical condition. Warning signs which are no longer applicable, or which provide a warning to a road feature which is self-evident (such as a stock yard) should be removed. Misuse of stock warning signs may lead to a failure of drivers to acknowledge and respond to the warning message.

A number of stock warning signs still in place have now been superseded. Warning signs depicting a single type of animal (i.e., cow or sheep) or "unfenced road, beware of wandering stock" or animals on roads in different languages should no longer be used. These signs should be removed or replaced at the end of their effective life with the appropriate signs discussed in this document.

6 Roadside grazing

Local Councils have the authority to control the droving and grazing of animals along the roadside. Whilst some Councils will permit stock to graze along the roadside this practice should be discouraged along roads under the care and control of the Department. If Council is to permit grazing of the road reserve along a fenced reserve, additional fencing should be provided by the Stockowner or Council to prevent stock straying onto the roadway.

7 Preservation of native vegetation

The *Guidelines for the Management of Roadside Native Vegetation and Regrowth Vegetation*, published by the Native Vegetation Council (2019) identifies grazing as a risk to native vegetation and the *Native Vegetation Act* imposes controls over the grazing of areas of native vegetation. However, this Act does not impose any controls over the droving of stock along roads, but does suggest Councils and Stockowners avoid where possible routes which contain native vegetation.

The Department will not usually be involved in this aspect of the movement of stock. However, any concerns with the routes taken by Stockowners should be referred to the local Council or relevant authority.

8 Further Information

Any questions in regard to this information or with a particular stock on road concern in your area, should be directed to DIT on (08) 7133 3300.