

Operational Instruction

2.22

Wildlife Warning Signs on Roads



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Government of South Australia
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TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT Operational Instructions

Wildlife Warning Signs on Roads - 2.22

AMENDMENT RECORD

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Manager, Traffic Services
28 / 07 / 2021

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1. Scope

This Operational Instruction (OI) provides guidance on:

- the provision of wildlife warning signs,
- the provision of wildlife information signs, and
- the evaluation process undertaken for approval to install such signs on state controlled roads,

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with an aim of establishing a uniform state-wide application of signage for wildlife.

Wildlife warning and information signs include signs for animals such as kangaroos, camels, wild horses, deer, emus, wombats, koalas, ducks, possums, lizards, echidnas, birds, other small marsupials and reptiles.

Signage details and requirements for domestic stock on road, both of a temporary and permanent nature, is included in DIT Operational Instruction 2.7 “Stock on Roads”.

This Operational Instruction supplements Australian Standard AS 1742.2 - 2009 (clause 4.11.2.7 “Hazardous Wildlife”).

When used in accordance with this Operational Instruction, these traffic control devices may be installed under the Minister’s Instrument of General Approval and Delegation to Council, or the Instrument of Authorisation and Delegation to the Unit Manager, Traffic Solutions. Traffic control devices which vary from this Operational Instruction require the separate approval of the Manager, Traffic Services for each location prior to installation.

2. Background

Traditionally, signs indicating animals on roads have been installed to warn road users of a potential hazard to themselves, not for the protection of the animals. This is in accordance with well-accepted practices. More recently, warning signs are being installed in response to concerns about the safety of wildlife. The community may naturally be concerned about the safety of animals, in particular smaller species, when they see them on the road. As a result, members of the public are approaching DIT or local governments asking for signs to be installed in the belief that these warning signs will alter driver behaviour by indicating the presence of animals on the road and, thereby, reducing the animal fatality rate.

Wildlife warning and information signs are not specifically intended to perform an animal preservation role and research to date indicates that they are not particularly effective for this purpose. If the preservation of animals is considered to be critical for the survival of the local animal population, other management treatments will be required (signs alone are not adequate).

3. Requests for signs

Requests for wildlife signs should be forwarded to the relevant Road Authority for consideration.

If the request for a sign relates to an animal not included in the standard list (see Appendix B) and there appears to be strong reasons for such signs to be provided, the matter should be discussed with DIT's Manager, Traffic Services.

4. Types of wildlife requiring warning signs

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Traditionally, Road Authorities have only installed wildlife warning signs to warn of animals that can cause significant damage or loss of control to passenger vehicles or personal injury to vehicle occupants resulting from a collision. When large animals, such as camels, kangaroos, wild horses, deer, emus and wombats (see appendix A) contact a vehicle, there is a high likelihood of both injury to the animal and damage to the vehicle. In addition, when trying to avoid these animals, motorists may run off the road and/or collide with other vehicle(s) or roadside objects causing injury to occupants and damage to vehicles, therefore the installation of wildlife warning signs for these large animals may be warranted.

Wildlife warning signs should not be installed for small animals that are unlikely to cause any damage or personal injury during a collision. Signs indicating their presence are also unlikely to alter driver behaviour. For example, animals such as ducks, possums, lizards, echidnas and small birds would not warrant the installation of wildlife warning signs. To address community concern for smaller wildlife, DIT has developed a range of wildlife information signs. Wildlife information signs may be installed for these types of animals (refer to Section 5.2 for details of wildlife information signs).

Koalas are considered a special case and, if required, wildlife warning signs should be erected in lieu of wildlife information signs. When a vehicle hits a koala, it is more likely the koala will suffer the greater injury as the koala is relatively small. The koala is an endeared national symbol of Australia and is very vulnerable to traffic. Drivers would be expected to instinctively take evasive action to avoid hitting a koala. As with the larger animals, when attempting to avoid a koala, drivers may also run off the road and/or collide with other vehicle(s) or roadside objects, causing injury to occupants and damage to vehicles. For these reasons, when signs are warranted, wildlife warning signs are appropriate for koalas.

5. Signing Requirements

5.1 Hazardous Animals

Wildlife warning signs should not be provided for animals that inhabit a region on a seasonal or short-term nature. Wildlife must frequently encroach onto the roadside in localised areas during time periods where there is a significant traffic volume or where drivers are unlikely to expect them to warrant the installation of signs.

Warning signs shall indicate a single type of animal (see appendix A) that regularly and often poses the hazard. If more than two wildlife warning signs are required at the one location then either:

1. Install a warning sign 'WILDLIFE' (W5-SA112) in lieu of a symbolic sign, or
2. Install a symbolic sign which indicates the greatest hazard of animal to vehicles or occupants.

Wildlife warning signs may be duplicated (installed on each side of the road) where required (that is, on multi-lane divided roads).

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These warning signs should be continually assessed for their need and relevance on site and signs that are no longer applicable should be removed.



W5-SA112

The actual advance warning distance cannot accurately be determined because of the random nature of animals along the road. The signs should be located prior to the area where the animals are likely to be encountered and if the presence of animals is expected over a distance exceeding a distance of 1 km, then supplementary plates W8-17-1 should be used. If the animals are present over a long distance on rural roads then the wildlife warning signs may be repeated (if warranted) at intervals of not less than 5 km. For remote area of the state then repeater signs along a route should be considered at 20 km intervals.



W8-17-1

In addition the sign should be placed so that it does not compete with other road or roadside features for the driver's attention.

Animal warning signs shall not take precedence or be permitted to obscure or detract from other traffic control devices.

5.2 Information signs for small animals

Although signs may be requested by the community to raise awareness of the plight of smaller animals, standard warning signs shall not be used. Instead, consideration should be given to signs that are aimed at creating general awareness of the smaller type of wildlife (shown below). Symbols for different types of animals are available

(see Appendix B) and others may be developed for use by contacting DIT's Traffic Services.



TES 14977

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Wildlife information signs should also be provided in areas where the presence of animals along the road is well known or expected. Wildlife information signs should be continually assessed for their need and relevance, and signs that are no longer applicable should be removed.

Wildlife information signs shall indicate a single type of animal that should be expected. If there are different types of animals encroaching on the roadside within a localised area and wildlife information signs are required for two or more different animal types, the installation of one sign (indicating the animal most at risk from traffic strikes) shall be provided. No more than one wildlife information sign is to be installed at any one location. Wildlife information signs may be duplicated (installed on each side of the road) where required.

NOTE: These information sign shall not be installed on Freeway/Expressway type roads.

6. Injured animal contact signs

The Fauna Rescue SA has developed and is operating a state-wide easily-remembered 1300-number for animal welfare emergencies. The 1300KOALAS number is both an initiative of and operated by the Fauna Rescue SA.

The 'KOALAS' corresponds with alphanumeric numbers on a phone keypad (562527) making it very easy to remember. All calls to the 1300KOALAS number are directed to the Fauna Rescue SA call centre, which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week to co-ordinate assistance/rescue.

There are a number of conditions that must be met before the 1300KOALAS supplementary plate may be installed on to rural arterial roads. All installations of the 1300KOALAS sign must be supported by the Fauna Rescue SA. This is to ensure that the operators of this service (Fauna Rescue SA) are aware of all locations that the signs are installed and that they also have sufficient carers in those locations to service the signed area.

NOTE for managed freeways such as the SE Freeway and Southern Expressway the contact information will display DIT's Traffic Management Centre (TMC) number 1800 018013 (TES 19591), from which the TMC operators will contact Fauna Rescue SA to help co-ordinate the rescue.



TES 19591



TES 19595



TES 19597

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TES 19597 supplementary sign is used with the Hazardous animal signs and TES 19595 is used with wildlife information type signs.

Alternate text that can be used with TES 19595 and 19597 is as follows:

- 1300KOALAS
- 1300KOALAZ
- 1300KIWILD

“Adelaide and Hills Koala Rescue” have a ‘1300KOALAZ’ number, which can be utilised on a supplementary sign for injured koalas located specifically in the Metropolitan Adelaide or Adelaide Hills regions, as defined by the map shown on the Adelaide and Hills Koala Rescue web page, refer to <https://www.1300koalaz.com/>

Note that this number must only be used in association with a sign depicting a koala, as shown below.



Hazardous animal sign (Koala) with TES 19597



Wildlife information sign (Koala) with TES 19595

Kangaroo Island has a ‘1300KIWILD’ number, which can be used on a supplementary sign for injured animals, with these signs to be located only on Kangaroo Island



Wildlife information sign
(Kangaroo) with TES 19595

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7. Assessment Criteria

All requests received for the installation of wildlife warning or awareness signs shall be evaluated by the relevant Road Authority. Individuals or organizations requesting wildlife signs should provide as much of the following information as possible to support the request and to allow an assessment on the need and potential effectiveness of the proposed signs.

Standard wildlife warning or information signs are limited to those listed in DIT's web-base Sign Index (<http://www.dteiapps.com.au/signindx/>). However, others may be developed from time to time by DIT's Traffic Services.

Wildlife warning signs shall not to be installed for the purposes of promoting / informing road users of local wildlife habitats.

Assessment Criteria:

1. A record of crashes due to wildlife
2. The potential hazard posed by :
 - Type and size of wildlife (to determine whether warning or information signs may be required)
 - Seasonal or constant presence of wildlife
 - Sight distance along the road
 - Degree of clear visibility of the roadside, particularly in the clear zone
 - Fencing of roadside properties to prevent wildlife encroachment
 - Presence of road lighting
3. Information and records on animal mortality along the road section

The following information can be provided by the customer to help with the assessment:

- Numbers and frequency of wildlife observed to be on the road
- Amount of animal fatalities
- Time of crossing (day or night, dusk or dawn)

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Appendix A – Warning signs for hazardous animals



Appendix B - Information signs for small animals



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