

Keep Left Unless Overtaking

Operational Instruction 2.29

June 2025



Government of South Australia
Department for Infrastructure
and Transport

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5	24 June 2025	Format update, updated to AS 1742.2 (2022), amended End Keep Left Unless Overtaking sign use to reflect Australian Road Rules, added Use Left Lane(s) reminder sign TES 14598, amended criteria to refer to passenger car unit per hour thresholds, removed references to Level of Service

Approvals record

Approver	Position	Date	Signature
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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 general requirements for the installation of “KEEP LEFT UNLESS OVERTAKING” (KLUO) (R6-29) signs on multi-lane roads.

These signs are only used on roads under the care and control of the Department for Infrastructure and Transport (the Department) in 80 km/h speed zones. The objective of this instruction is to provide consistency in applying this restriction to keep vehicles to the left lanes of a multi-lane road while creating favourable overtaking conditions to improve traffic flow.

This document also provides guidance on the use of “USE LEFT LANE(S) UNLESS OVERTAKING” (TES 14598) signs which may be used to reinforce *Australian Road Rules* (ARR) Rule 130(1)(a), which requires drivers to keep left on roads where the speed limit is more than 80 km/h.

The traffic control devices in this document require the separate approval of the Department’s Network Management Services for each location prior to installation.

This document shall be read in conjunction with Australian Standard *AS 1742.2 Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) Part 2: Traffic control devices for general use* (2022) clause 4.12.2(g).

2 Background

The *Australian Road Rules* state that a driver on a multi-lane road must not drive in the right lane where the speed limit is over 80 km/h, unless turning right, making a U-turn, overtaking, avoiding an obstruction or if traffic is congested (refer to *Australian Road Rules*, Rule 130(1)(a) and Rule 130(2)).

This rule can be extended where appropriate to roads of lower speed limits by the use of KLUO signs (refer to *Australian Road Rules*, Rule 130(1)(b), Rule 130(2) and Rule 130(3)).

3 Keep Left Unless Overtaking signs

The KLUO sign (R6-29) is to be used in accordance with the ARR Rule 130(1)(b), Rule 130(2) and Rule 130(3).

Under certain conditions it may be appropriate to apply the rule to some 80 km/h roads. It is not proposed to apply the rule to roads zoned less than 80 km/h speed in South Australia.



R6-29

3.1 Criteria for use

The conditions under which the rule may be applied on roads with a speed limit of 80 km/h are discussed below.

3.1.1 Length of speed zone

KLUO signs shall not be installed on sections of road with 80 km/h speed zones of less than 2 km (i.e., approximately one and a half minutes driving). Lengths of road less than 2 km are not considered to be of a sufficient length to provide the necessary space and time for drivers to re-position their vehicles and satisfy the road rules.

3.1.2 Traffic volumes

Traffic volumes play an important role in determining whether drivers in an 80 km/h speed zone should be required by law to keep left unless overtaking.

KLUO signs may be applied to a multi-lane road with an 80 km/h speed limit when the peak hour traffic volumes (passenger car units per hour, pcu/hr) are less than the following thresholds:

- Two lanes in one direction: volume < 1200 pcu/hr
- Three lanes in one direction: volume < 2400 pcu/hr

These volume thresholds help achieve acceptable traffic flow conditions in left lanes when KLUO signs are used. Above these thresholds, it is questionable if the KLUO signs will have any effect, because the congestion in the left lanes would force drivers to use the right lane.

3.1.3 Right turn opportunities

If the distance between right turn opportunities is short (particularly if the right turns are at major intersections), it is likely that there will be traffic in the right lane anticipating a right turn in that section of 80 km/h zone. Right Turn Opportunities (RTOs) are considered as intersections, right hand slip lanes, and median openings for right turns or U-turns.

For practical reasons, if the average distance between right turn opportunities is less than 700 m (less than 30 seconds travel time) then it is likely that there will be traffic in the right lane anticipating a right turn. If this distance is greater than 700 m (ie, greater than 30 seconds travel time) it is considered that the section of road is a candidate for KLUO signs.

In some cases, the opportunity to turn right varies significantly in opposing directions. Roads that fit into this category shall have KLUO signs in both directions if one direction meets the average distance between RTO criteria.

3.2 Unsuitable locations for Keep Left Unless Overtaking signs

The KLUO sign shall not be installed along a section of road under the following circumstances:

- Where the speed limit is other than 80 km/h (see Section 4 for alternative signs)
- The road is not multi-lane, or duplicate lanes merge into a single lane within the 80 km/h zone, or a traffic sign or road marking on the road that indicates that the road is no longer a multi-lane road.

- The length of 80 km/h section is less than 2 km in both directions.
- Distance between right turn opportunities is 690 m or less in both directions

3.3 Installation of Keep Left Unless Overtaking signs

3.3.1 Keep Left Unless Overtaking sign (R6-29)

On roads with an 80 km/h speed zone which meet the criteria in Section 3.1, KLUO signs shall be installed as follows:

- To provide clear vision of the signs, signs shall be installed after the end of a merge lane or an acceleration lane, and not be installed on a curved section of road.
- A minimum clearance of 50 m should be kept between KLUO signs and other traffic control devices (e.g. signs, traffic lights etc).
- Signs shall be installed within 60 m to 100 m after the 80 km/h speed restriction (R4-1) signs consistently, duplicated if possible (refer Figure 3.1). If this is not achievable for example there are pedestrian crossings, rail crossings, other signs, etc within this section, then KLUO signs shall be installed either at the minimum distance of 40 m prior to the speed restriction sign or as close as reasonably achievable 100 m after the speed restriction sign.
- If the start of the 80 km/h speed zone is located within 300 m in advance of a signalised intersection, the KLUO signs shall not be installed on the approach to the intersection. This measure aims to increase lane storage at a signalised intersection. The KLUO signs shall instead be installed after the speed restriction repeater sign location beyond the intersection, in accordance with the above sign location requirements.

3.3.2 End Keep Left Unless Overtaking sign (R6-32)

ARR Rule 130(3) states that:

A keep left unless overtaking sign on a multi-lane road applies to the length of road beginning at the sign and ending at the nearest of the following:

(a) an end keep left unless overtaking sign on the road;

(b) a traffic sign or road marking on the road that indicates that the road is no longer a multi-lane road;

(c) if the road ends at a T-intersection or dead end—the end of the road.

Duplicated END KLUO signs shall be installed where:

- The speed limit is reduced to less than 80 km/h. END KLUO signs shall be placed between 60 m and 100 m after the speed restriction sign (R4-1(70) or R4-1(60)) (refer to Figure 3.1).

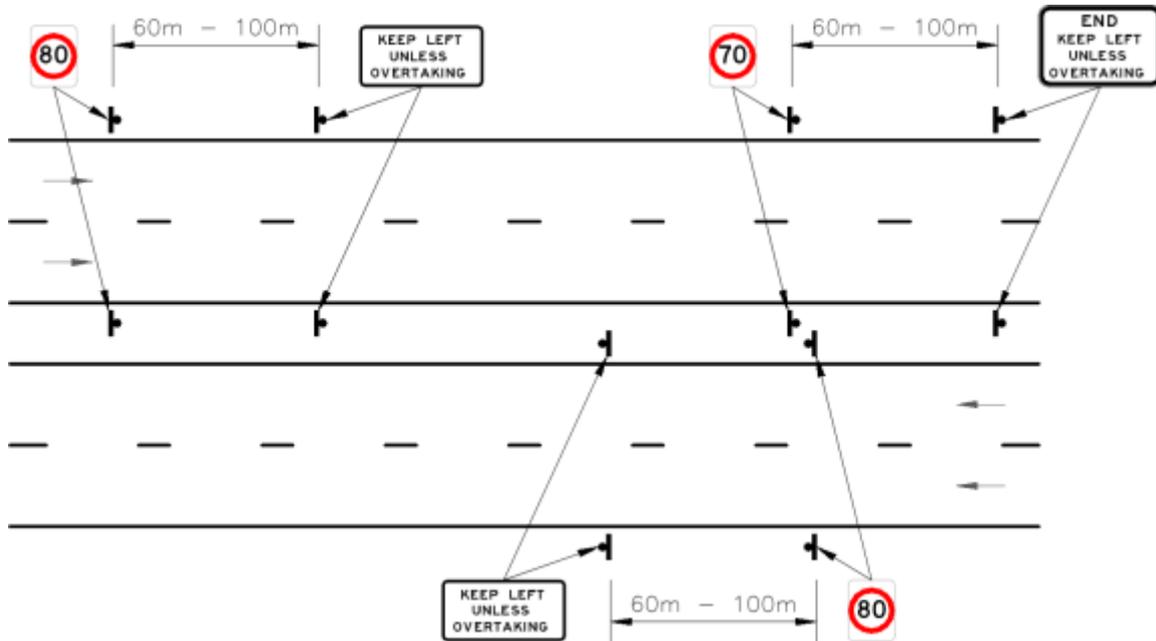


Figure 3.1 Placement of KLUO & END KLUO signs on a multi-lane road

END KLUO signs are not required where:

- The section of 80 km/h road is terminated, such as at the T-intersection with another road where the other road has priority.
- A multi-lane road merges to form a road with a single lane in each direction.

Where the speed limit increases to more than 80 km/h, the signed KLUO requirement continues to apply through this section of road until the end conditions described in ARR 130(3) are met. It would be confusing to drivers to install an END KLUO sign at this location in order to end the signed KLUO requirement of ARR 130(1)(b) and start the unsigned KLUO requirement of ARR 130(1)(a). Therefore, the extent of the higher speed limit section must be checked to ensure that END KLUO signs are installed where the speed limit reduces to 80 km/h or less (unless the road terminates, or is no longer multi-lane, in which case they are not required).

4 Use Left Lane(s) Unless Overtaking signs

On multi-lane roads with a speed limit of more than 80 km/h (90 km/h or more), ARR 130 applies and requires drivers to keep left unless overtaking, unless turning right, making a U-turn, overtaking, avoiding an obstruction or if traffic is congested.

The Use Left Lanes Unless Overtaking (TES 14598) may be installed as a general reminder to drivers of this rule where there is a history of poor driver compliance with ARR 130 and:

- the road is multi-lane with a speed limit is 90 km/h or more, and
- all exits are to the left such that there are no right turn or u-turn opportunities.



TES 14598

On these types of roads, typically expressway or freeway type roads, vehicles only need to travel in the right lane in order to overtake.

4.1 Installation of Use Left Lane(s) Unless Overtaking signs

Where used, the signs should be installed at regular intervals along the road, equivalent to approximately 2 minutes of travel. They should be located after on-ramps to remind drivers who have entered the road of the requirement to keep left, and be installed on the right hand side of the carriageway within the median.

Where there are three or more lanes in one direction, the “Use Left Lanes” (plural) version shall be used. On roads with only two lanes in one direction, the “Use Left Lane” (singular) version shall be used.