WHEN NOT IN USE, REMOVE THE PCMS FROM THE RIGHT-OF-WAY OR PLACE THE PCMS BEHIND BARRIER OR GUARDRAIL WITH SIGN PANEL TURNED PARALLEL TO TRAFFIC

PORTABLE CHANGEABLE MESSAGE SIGNS

1. The Engineer/Inspector shall approve all messages used on portable changeable message signs (PCMS).
2. Messages on PCMS should contain no more than 8 words (about four to eight characters per word), not including simple words such as "TO," "FOR," "AT," etc.
3. Messages should consist of a single phase, or two phases that alternate. Three-phase messages are not allowed. Each phase of the message should convey a single thought, and must be understood by itself.
4. Use the word "EXIT" to refer to an exit ramp on a freeway; i.e., "EXIT CLOSED." Do not use the term "RAMP."
5. Always use the route or interstate designation (IH, US, SH, FM) along with the number when referring to a roadway.
6. When in use the bottom of a stationary PCMS message panel should be a minimum 7 feet above the roadway, where possible.
7. The message term "WEEKEND" should be used only if the work is to start on Saturday morning and end by Sunday evening at midnight. Actual days and hours of work should be displayed on the PCMS if work is to begin on Friday evening and/or continue into Monday morning.
8. The Engineer/Inspector may select one of two options which are available for displaying a two-phase message on a PCMS. Each phase may be displayed for either four seconds each or for three seconds each.
9. Do not "flash" messages or words included in a message. The message should be steady burn or continuous while displayed.
10. Do not present redundant information on a two-phase message; i.e., keeping two lines of the message the same and changing the third line.
11. Do not use the word "Danger" in message.
12. Do not display the message "LANES SHIFT LEFT" or "LANES SHIFT RIGHT" on a PCMS. Drivers do not understand the message.
13. Do not display messages that scroll horizontally or vertically across the face of the sign.
14. The following table lists abbreviated words and two-word phrases that are acceptable for use on a PCMS. Both words in a phrase must be displayed together. Words or phrases not on this list should not be abbreviated, unless shown in the TMUTCD.
15. PCMS character height should be at least 18 inches for trailer mounted units. They should be visible from at least 1/2 (.5) mile and the text should be legible from at least 600 feet at night and 800 feet in daylight. Truck mounted units must have a character height of 10 inches and must be legible from at least 400 feet.
16. Each line of text should be centered on the message board rather than left or right justified.
17. If disabled, the PCMS should default to an illegible display that will not alarm motorists and will only be used to alert workers that the PCMS has malfunctioned. A pattern such as a series of horizontal solid bars is appropriate.

WORD OR PHRASE	ABBREVIATION
Access Road	ACCS RD
Alternate	ALT
Avenue	AVE
Best Route	BEST RTE
Boulevard	BLVD
Bridge	BRDG
Cannot	CANT
Center	CTR
Construction Ahead	CONST AHD
CROSSING	XING
Detour Route	DETOUR RTE
Do Not	DONT
East	E
Eastbound	(route) E
Emergency	EMER
Emergency Vehicle	EMER VEH
Entrance, Enter	ENT
Express Lane	EXP LN
Expressway	EXPWY
XXXX Feet	XXXX FT
Fog Ahead	FOG AHD
Freeway	FRWY, FWY
Freeway Blocked	FWY BLKD
Friday	FRI
Hazardous Driving	HAZ DRIVING
Hazardous Material	HAZMAT
High-Occupancy	HOV
Vehicle Highway	HWY
Hour(s)	HR, HRS
Information	INFO
It Is	ITS
Junction	JCT
Left	LFT
Left Lane	LFT LN
Lane Closed	LN CLOSED
Lower Level	LWR LEVEL
Maintenance	MAINT

WORD OR PHRASE	ABBREVIATION
Major	MAJ
Miles	MI
Miles Per Hour	MPH
Minor	MNR
Monday	MON
Normal	NORM
North	N
Northbound	(route) N
Parking	PKING
Road	RD
Right Lane	RT LN
Saturday	SAT
Service Road	SERV RD
Shoulder	SHLDR
Slippery	SLIP
South	S
Southbound	(route) S
Speed	SPD
Street	ST
Sunday	SUN
Telephone	PHONE
Temporary	TEMP
Thursday	THURS
To Downtown	TO DWNTN
Traffic	TRAF
Travelers	TRVLRS
Tuesday	TUES
Time Minutes	TIME MIN
Upper Level	UPR LEVEL
Vehicles (s)	VEH, VEHS
Warning	WARN
Wednesday	WED
Weight Limit	WT LIMIT
West	W
Westbound	(route) W
Wet Pavement	WET PVMT
Will Not	WONT

Roadway designation # IH-number, US-number, SH-number, FM-number

RECOMMENDED PHASES AND FORMATS FOR PCMS MESSAGES DURING ROADWORK ACTIVITIES

(The Engineer may approve other messages not specifically covered here.)

Phase 1: Condition Lists

Road/Lane/Ramp Closure List

FREEWAY CLOSED X MILE	FRONTAGE ROAD CLOSED
ROAD CLOSED AT SH XXX	SHOULDER CLOSED XXX FT
ROAD CLSD AT FM XXXX	RIGHT LN CLOSED XXX FT
RIGHT X LANES CLOSED	RIGHT X LANES OPEN
CENTER LANE CLOSED	DAYTIME LANE CLOSURES
NIGHT LANE CLOSURES	I-XX SOUTH EXIT CLOSED
VARIOUS LANES CLOSED	EXIT XXX CLOSED X MILE
EXIT CLOSED	RIGHT LN TO BE CLOSED
MALL DRIVEWAY CLOSED	X LANES CLOSED TUE - FRI
XXXXXXXX BLVD CLOSED	

Other Condition List

ROADWORK XXX FT	ROAD REPAIRS XXXX FT
FLAGGER XXXX FT	LANE NARROWS XXXX FT
RIGHT LN NARROWS XXXX FT	TWO-WAY TRAFFIC XX MILE
MERGING TRAFFIC XXXX FT	CONST TRAFFIC XXX FT
LOOSE GRAVEL XXXX FT	UNEVEN LANES XXXX FT
DETOUR X MILE	ROUGH ROAD XXXX FT
ROADWORK PAST SH XXXX	ROADWORK NEXT FRI-SUN
BUMP XXXX FT	US XXX EXIT X MILES
TRAFFIC SIGNAL XXXX FT	LANES SHIFT *

* LANES SHIFT in Phase 1 must be used with STAY IN LANE in Phase 2.

Phase 2: Possible Component Lists

Action to Take/Effect on Travel List

MERGE RIGHT	FORM X LINES RIGHT
DETOUR NEXT X EXITS	USE XXXXX RD EXIT
USE EXIT XXX	USE EXIT I-XX NORTH
STAY ON US XXX SOUTH	USE I-XX E TO I-XX N
TRUCKS USE US XXX N	WATCH FOR TRUCKS
WATCH FOR TRUCKS	EXPECT DELAYS
EXPECT DELAYS	PREPARE TO STOP
REDUCE SPEED XXX FT	END SHOULDER USE
USE OTHER ROUTES	WATCH FOR WORKERS
STAY IN LANE *	

Location List

AT FM XXXX
BEFORE RAILROAD CROSSING
NEXT X MILES
PAST US XXX EXIT
XXXXXXX TO XXXXXXX
US XXX TO FM XXXX

Warning List

SPEED LIMIT XX MPH
MAXIMUM SPEED XX MPH
MINIMUM SPEED XX MPH
ADVISORY SPEED XX MPH
RIGHT LANE EXIT
USE CAUTION
DRIVE SAFELY
DRIVE WITH CARE

** Advance Notice List

TUE-FRI XX AM- X PM
APR XX- XX X PM-X AM
BEGINS MONDAY
BEGINS MAY XX
MAY X-X XX PM - XX AM
NEXT FRI-SUN
XX AM TO XX PM
NEXT TUE AUG XX
TONIGHT XX PM- XX AM

** See Application Guidelines Note 6.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

1. Only 1 or 2 phases are to be used on a PCMS.
2. The 1st phase (or both) should be selected from the "Road/Lane/Ramp Closure List" and the "Other Condition List".
3. A 2nd phase can be selected from the "Action to Take/Effect on Travel, Location, General Warning, or Advance Notice Phase Lists".
4. A Location Phase is necessary only if a distance or location is not included in the first phase selected.
5. If two PCMS are used in sequence, they must be separated by a minimum of 1000 ft. Each PCMS shall be limited to two phases, and should be understandable by themselves.
6. For advance notice, when the current date is within seven days of the actual work date, calendar days should be replaced with days of the week. Advance notification should typically be for no more than one week prior to the work.

WORDING ALTERNATIVES

1. The words RIGHT, LEFT and ALL can be interchanged as appropriate.
2. Roadway designations IH, US, SH, FM and LP can be interchanged as appropriate.
3. EAST, WEST, NORTH and SOUTH (or abbreviations E, W, N and S) can be interchanged as appropriate.
4. Highway names and numbers replaced as appropriate.
5. ROAD, HIGHWAY and FREEWAY can be interchanged as needed.
6. AHEAD may be used instead of distances if necessary.
7. FT and MI, MILE and MILES interchanged as appropriate.
8. AT, BEFORE and PAST interchanged as needed.
9. Distances or AHEAD can be eliminated from the message if a location phase is used.

PCMS SIGNS WITHIN THE R.O.W. SHALL BE BEHIND GUARDRAIL OR CONCRETE BARRIER OR SHALL HAVE A MINIMUM OF FOUR (4) PLASTIC DRUMS PLACED PERPENDICULAR TO TRAFFIC ON THE UPSTREAM SIDE OF THE PCMS, WHEN EXPOSED TO ONE DIRECTION OF TRAFFIC. WHEN EXPOSED TO TWO WAY TRAFFIC, THE FOUR DRUMS SHOULD BE PLACED WITH ONE DRUM AT EACH OF THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE UNIT.

FULL MATRIX PCMS SIGNS

1. When Full Matrix PCMS signs are used, the character height and legibility/visibility requirements shall be maintained as listed in Note 15 under "PORTABLE CHANGEABLE MESSAGE SIGNS" above.
2. When symbol signs, such as the "Flagger Symbol"(CW20-7) are represented graphically on the Full Matrix PCMS sign and, with the approval of the Engineer, it shall maintain the legibility/visibility requirement listed above.
3. When symbol signs are represented graphically on the Full Matrix PCMS, they shall only supplement the use of the static sign represented, and shall not substitute for, or replace that sign.
4. A full matrix PCMS may be used to simulate a flashing arrow board provided it meets the visibility, flash rate and dimming requirements on BC(7), for the same size arrow.

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BARRICADE AND CONSTRUCTION PORTABLE CHANGEABLE MESSAGE SIGN (PCMS)

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