
351 SPECIAL ROUTES

Several special categories of State Highways have been established to more clearly define the role and function of a State Highway within the overall statewide or national system of highways. **These special routes (with the exception of Detour and Historic Routes) shall be defined at the state level by the State Transportation Board as part of the official designation of that segment of State Highway. All Special Routes on Interstate and US Routes (with the exception of Detour routes) shall also be approved by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) prior to placement of any sign noting a special route designation.** Historic routes are designated by the state Parkways, Historic, and Scenic Roads Advisory Committee (PHSRAC) {see TGP 335}. The ADOT Route Numbering Committee advises the Director, the State Transportation Board, and PHSRAC on whether and where special routes (except Detour routes) should be defined or applied.

Special routes are signed by installing the appropriate M4 series auxiliary above the M1 series route marker sign and below the M3 series cardinal direction auxiliary (if used). Exceptions to this practice for Alternate, Business, and Future routes are noted below. See Figure 351-A for examples.

The types of officially-recognized special routes on the State Highway System are as follows:

Alternate Route or Alt Route:

A route which starts at a point where it branches off from the main numbered route, continues along a different alignment, and then re-connects with the regular route at a different location either within or outside the State. Alternate routes are sometimes designated along the original alignment of a numbered route where the main route is realigned and the original alignment remains on the State Highway System. These routes use M4-1 or M4-1a auxiliaries, or an "A" designation incorporated into the route number following the 2 or 3-digit number designation instead of an auxiliary; i.e. "89A" instead of "Alternate 89".

Business Route:

A route principally within the corporate limits of a city which provides travelers an opportunity to pass through a business area of a city (or cities) where the main numbered route avoids the business area or is a controlled-access highway or freeway. A "loop" Business route connects with the main route at each end of the metropolitan or business area. A "spur" Business route extends from a State Highway into a business area and terminates in the business area. Interstate Business routes use M1-2 (Loop) or M1-3 (Spur) signs without a Business auxiliary (the "Business" designation is incorporated into the M1-2 or M1-3 sign, so no auxiliary is needed). Business routes on U.S., State, or other categories of routes use a M4-3 auxiliary.

By-Pass Route:

A route which branches off the main numbered route, entirely bypasses a city or congested area, and rejoins the regular numbered route beyond the city or congested area. By-pass routes are not often used on the State Highway System, as the general practice is to route the main numbered route on the bypass alignment and use a business or other special route designation on the route traversing the city or congested area. By-pass routes, if defined, use a M4-2 auxiliary.

Detour Route:

A route defined in an approved traffic control, traffic management, or incident management plan to temporarily re-route some or all traffic on a roadway or highway. The distance of a detour route can range from one block to hundreds of miles. Detour routes, unless for a short-term incident, should be clearly signed along their entire length, especially at intersections or interchanges. If a detour route uses roadways or other facilities owned or operated by another state, jurisdiction, agency, or other entity, permission and/or concurrence should be obtained from each agency or jurisdiction for the use and signing of the detour prior to implementing the detour. Detour routes for motorized traffic use a M4-8 auxiliary. A M4-8a or M4-8b End Detour auxiliary may be used at the end of the detour route. M4-9 signs may be used for detour routes for non-motorized traffic. A Truck Detour route (combining stacked M4-4 and M4-8 auxiliaries above the M1 route marker) may be used to encourage truck traffic to bypass a work zone or area. All auxiliaries used with a M4-8 Detour auxiliary, including the M4-8 Detour auxiliary itself, should be black on orange.

Future Route:

A route officially defined as a "Future Interstate" in accordance with 23 CFR 470 Subpart A Appendix C. Signs for a Future Interstate route do not use auxiliaries, but instead use a single green panel with the word "Future", an Interstate shield displaying the selected future route number (but NOT displaying the word "INTERSTATE"), and the word "Corridor" arranged vertically. These signs should not be used at interchanges or junctions, but only sparingly along the designated future route. All Future Interstate route sign locations are subject to the approval of the FHWA Division Office.

Historic Route:

A route that at one time carried a designation as a US Numbered Highway, but is no longer designated as part of the US Highway System. **All Historic Routes shall be approved by the state Parkways, Historic, and Scenic Roads Advisory Committee (PHSRAC).** Historic routes do not use auxiliaries, but use the M1-4h route marker sign (M1-4i if on a larger guide sign) with the number of the historic US route.

Loop Route:

A route that serves as a circumferential route around a city center or metropolitan area. Loop routes do not use auxiliaries, but substitute "LOOP" for the "ARIZONA" legend on the state route marker.

Spur Route:

A route that branches off a main highway. This can be a connection to another highway, such as in an adjoining state, or to a destination or business area. Spur routes use a M4-101 auxiliary.

Truck Route:

A route branching from a main highway designated for recommended or mandatory use by trucks or other commercial vehicles. Truck routes use a M4-4 auxiliary.

Temporary Route or Temp Route:

A route which carries a number temporarily over a road that may be different from the permanent alignment of a future State Highway, or may not yet be fully developed into the ultimate facility type, or where a closure of a State Highway necessitates a different alignment for through traffic for a longer term than would normally be used for a detour designation. Under these conditions, a Temporary designation can provide route continuity until all construction and/or upgrades are complete and open to traffic. **If this type of route is designated, M4-7 or M4-7a auxiliaries shall be installed above all M1 series route signs to clarify that the designation is temporary in nature.** This helps to reduce the potential for confusion and misunderstanding when the designation is removed from the temporary route at a later date, or where the temporary route does not have the same design or operational features as the main or future highway.

Figure 351-A. Examples of Special Route Signing



Alternate Route



By-Pass Route



US or State



Interstate

Business Route



Detour Route



Future Route



Historic Route



Loop Route



Spur Route



Truck Route



Temporary Route