

Definition of Variable Message Sign:

A Variable Message Sign (VMS) is a sign for the purpose of displaying one of a number of messages that may be changed or switched on or off as required.

VMS comprise two types, Continuous and Discontinuous signs:

- Continuous signs are similar to fixed signs, the only difference being that they can show various messages by some electromechanical means.
For example rotating prism signs, roller blinds, etc.
- Discontinuous signs create messages using individual elements that can be in one of two states (or more) and can thereby create various messages on the same sign face.
For example flip-disk signs, fiber optic signs, LED signs, etc.

Most VMS used for Dynamic Traffic Management are of the discontinuous type, and make use of light emitting techniques (fiber optic or LED signs).

Note: In the USA also terms like Dynamic Message Signs (DMS), Changeable Message Signs (CMS) and Blank Out Signs (BOS) are used, where:

- a DMS is any sign that can change the message presented to the viewer (VMS, CMS or BOS);
- a VMS is the same as the abovementioned discontinuous sign;
- a CMS is a sign that can display one of two or more predefined messages, or be blank;
- a BOS is a two-state sign (message or blank).

Purpose Variable Message Sign

In Dynamic Traffic Management, VMS can be used for the following purposes:

A. Control, further to be divided in:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| Lane Control | ➤ lane change/closure |
| | ➤ lane merge by use of crosses and arrows |
| Speed Control | ➤ speed funneling |
| | ➤ speed harmonization |
| | ➤ by using speed indications, with or without red border |
| Prescriptions | ➤ "no overtaking" etc. |

VMS for lane and/or speed control purposes are in most cases positioned over the traffic lanes. Prescription signs are usually placed between two adjacent lanes or at the side of the road.



Example A1. NL- speed funneling



Example A2. D - speed harmonization and prescription

B. Danger Warning Messages, further to be divided in:

Weather Conditions

- fog
- snow
- ice
- rain
- wind

Incident / accident

Congestion / queue

Road works ahead

Road status

- closures
- slippery road
- icy road (black ice)



Example B1: UK – Road works ahead



Example B2: NL- Fog

C. Informative Messages, further to be divided in:

General Informative Messages

- useful traffic information

Informative Link Messages

Informative Network Messages

Informative Rerouting Messages

For informative signs many European countries use large text panels with two or three lines of text, sometimes accompanied by a pictogram. When used for Informative Network Messages, these are sometimes called DRIPs (Dynamic Route Information Panels).

A new development is GRIPs (Graphical Route Information Panels), where link or network information is presented in a graphical way.

On the next page you will find some examples of the signs mentioned above.



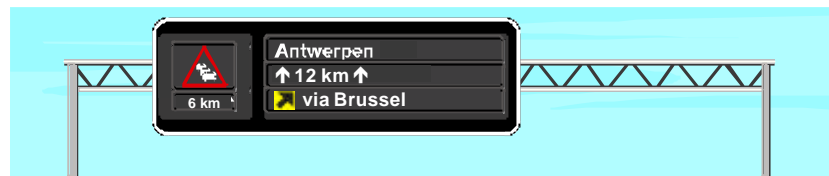
Example C1: NL - General Informative Messages



Example C2: F - Informative Link Messages



Example C3: NL - Informative Link Messages



Example C4: NL-B Informative Rerouting Messages



Example C5: NL - Informative Rerouting Messages



Example C4: D - Informative Network Messages