



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

May 22, 2009

In Reply Refer To: HOTO-1

Mrs. Elena Soontit  
1575 Center Avenue, Apartment 3C  
Fort Lee, NJ 07024

Dear Mrs. Soontit:

Thank you for your May 15 e-mail requesting an official interpretation of the meaning of the No Bicycles (R5-6) symbol sign. The R5-6 sign is illustrated in Figures 2B-9 and 9B-2 and is discussed in Sections 2B.36 and 9B.08 of the 2003 MUTCD. Chapter 2B contains the provisions for regulatory signs that are used on roadways and Chapter 9B contains the provisions for signs that are associated with bicycle facilities.

Your e-mail message indicated that you are specifically interested in knowing whether this sign prohibits dismounting and walking a bicycle in an area where the sign is posted, or if it just prohibits riding a bicycle in an area where the sign is posted.

The answer to your question is that the R5-6 sign only prohibits riding a bicycle in the area where the sign is posted and does not prohibit dismounting and walking a bicycle. When a bicyclist dismounts and walks a bicycle, the bicyclist becomes a pedestrian, which is a different form of traffic than bicycle traffic. Pedestrian traffic is governed by a different set of rights and responsibilities than bicycle traffic. A pedestrian walking a bicycle has the same rights and responsibilities as a pedestrian pushing a stroller or a shopping cart and can walk anywhere that pedestrians are permitted to walk.

This interpretation of the meaning of the R5-6 sign is derived from the following provisions in the 2003 MUTCD:

- The first three paragraphs of Section 2B.36 state that the signs illustrated in Figure 2B-9 (including the R5-6 sign) give notice that designated types of traffic are excluded from using a particular roadway or facility and that the sign shall clearly indicate the type of traffic that is excluded. The clear meaning of these paragraphs is that the R5-6 sign only prohibits "bicycle traffic" from using the roadway or facility. A pedestrian is defined in



Section 1A.13 as "a person afoot . . .," which would include persons on foot who are walking a bicycle. The definition of traffic in Section 1A.13 mentions "pedestrians" and "bicyclists" separately, thus creating a distinction between these two types of traffic. Thus, bicycle traffic includes only persons who are riding a bicycle (otherwise known as a bicyclist).

- The first paragraph of Section 9B.08 provides additional clarity regarding this issue. It states that the R5-6 sign should be installed where "bicyclists are prohibited." A person walking a bicycle is a pedestrian, not a bicyclist. Therefore a person walking a bicycle in an area where an R5-6 sign is posted would not be violating the regulation associated with the sign.
- Figure 2B-9 includes other signs (such as the R5-7 and the R5-10b signs) that an agency can post if they intend to prohibit both bicyclists and pedestrians (including persons walking bicycles) from using a roadway or facility.

For recordkeeping purposes, we have assigned the following official interpretation number and title: "9-116 (I) – Meaning of No Bicycles (R5-6) Symbol Sign." Please refer to this number in any future correspondence regarding this topic.

Thank you for your interest in improving the clarity of the provisions contained in the MUTCD.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Pisano". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "P" at the end.

Paul Pisano  
Acting Director, Office of Transportation  
Operations

---

**From:** elenaks@aol.com [mailto:elenaks@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 19, 2009 4:52 PM  
**To:** Friedman, Bruce <FHWA>  
**Subject:** Re: Bicycle Sign R5-6

Mr. Friedman, thanks you very much for your assistance. My name and address:

Elena Soontit  
1575 Center Ave. Apt. 3C  
Fort Lee, NJ 07024

201 592-1517

Thanks again

-----Original Message-----

From: Bruce.Friedman@dot.gov  
To: elenaks@aol.com  
Sent: Tue, 19 May 2009 3:28 pm  
Subject: RE: Bicycle Sign R5-6

Dear Madam,

You sent an e-mail requesting an official interpretation of the R5-6 sign and I would like to respond to your request by writing an official letter to you.

If you would be so kind, please respond to this message with your name and address so that I can properly address the letter.

Thanks,

Bruce

---

**Bruce E. Friedman, P.E., PTOE**  
Transportation Specialist, MUTCD Team  
Federal Highway Administration  
Office of Transportation Operations, HOTO-1  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Mail Stop E86-201  
Washington, DC 20590  
Phone: 202 366 5012  
E-mail: [bruce.friedman@dot.gov](mailto:bruce.friedman@dot.gov)  
Website: <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/team.htm>

**From:** [elenaks@aol.com](mailto:elenaks@aol.com)[SMTP:[ELENAKS@AOL.COM](mailto:ELENAKS@AOL.COM)]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 15, 2009 8:24:47 PM  
**To:** MUTCDofficialrequest <FHWA>  
**Subject:** Bicycle Sign R5-6

I request an official interpretation of this sign R5-6. It is a square sign with a black border and white background, with a bicycle picture in black and has a red circle with a diagonal sign over the bicycle.

I understand that this sign means no riding bicycle on this road where the sign is place. My question is can you walk your bike on the curb side of this road?

My husband saw this sign and walked his bike on the curbside of the road. A police gave him a ticket for an alledged violation of "No Disregard of Traffic Signs and Signals."  
There was no other sign that said you cannot walk you bike.

Please advise.

Thank you very much for your help. Is there a number I can call you?