

Approved:

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Office: Traffic Engineering
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Secretary

RESPONSIBILITY FOR PERMANENT HIGHWAY SIGNING

PURPOSE:

To establish Department functions and responsibilities regarding permanent highway signing.

AUTHORITY:

Sections 316.0745, 316.077, 334.044, 335.09, 335.10, 335.14, 337.407, 479.02, 479.107, 479.11, 479.16, 479.26, Florida Statutes, and Department Rules 14-10.009, Highway Beautification Program, 14-15.10, MUTCD, and 14-51, F.A.C, Signing for Destinations and Motorist Services on Non-Limited Access Highways.

SCOPE:

Offices affected by this procedure are Central and District Traffic Engineering, Maintenance, Roadway Design, Right-of-Way and District Structures.

GENERAL:

Florida law requires highway signing on all public roads to comply with federal standards and a uniform system of traffic control devices adopted by the Department. The federal "Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices" as amended is the system adopted. Changes in and conformance with the system are administered by the Central Traffic Engineering Office.

The design, application and location of signs is accomplished at both central office and district levels. Generally, signs are manufactured by either the Department's Lake City sign shop or by contract; installed by either Maintenance or a Contractor; and maintained by District Maintenance.

The erection of signs by others on state right-of-way is subject to approval by the District Traffic Operations Engineer and is clearly secondary to needed traffic control functions. In no

case shall the erection of such signs conflict, obscure or detract from required signs. Uniformity in design, application, and location of signs as well as a high level of maintenance is essential. Failure to provide the motorist with clear and reliable warning, information and guidance leads to disrespect and disobedience of signs and contributes to safety problems and unnecessary litigation.

Accordingly, it is essential that the division of responsibility in these areas be clearly understood and implemented.

Nonofficial signs within the highway right-of-way are contrary to law, a distraction to motorists, and create liability and maintenance problems.

PROCEDURE:

- (1) Regulatory Signs - Regulations such as speed zoning and parking restrictions must be formally established by notifying local authorities in writing by certified mail at least 14 days prior to sign installation. The District Traffic Operations Engineer is responsible for establishing all regulatory measures on the State Highway System including notification of local authorities and maintenance of appropriate records in accordance with Procedure Topic No. 750-010-011, Traffic Regulation Approval Process.
- (2) Standards and Design - The "Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices" (MUTCD) and the Department's "Roadway and Traffic Design Standards" (RTDS), as amended, are the approved standards for sign design and placement. Any sign not in compliance with the MUTCD must have prior written approval of the State Traffic Operations Engineer.

For construction projects, signing plans are generally prepared in the districts. However, signing plans for some special projects and the design of general information and specialty area signs are responsibilities of the Traffic Standards Section, Roadway Design Office. Design exceptions and variations for construction projects must be handled according to the "Plans Preparation Manual".

Retrofit of signs on existing structures must include structural adequacy analysis.

- (3) Application - Treating similar situations in a uniform manner is a vital consideration in sign design, selection and placement. Although the MUTCD sets forth criteria for sign application under a range of conditions, engineering judgment is essential to the proper use of signs.

Engineering studies such as spot speed studies, stop and yield sign controls, advance posting requirements, identifying signing needs and priorities are the responsibility of District Traffic Operations. Signing applications on construction projects are the responsibility of the design unit preparing and approving the signing plans. Proposed signing plans may be reviewed by the District Traffic Operations Engineer prior to approval by the design unit.

- (4) Installation - The location and positioning of signs shall comply with MUTCD criteria but specific locations must be based on engineering judgment and the standard order of signing priorities. These are a traffic engineering function and the responsibility of the District Traffic Operations Engineer except that the location and position of signs on plans and permit applications, are the responsibility of the engineer required to sign and seal such plans or permit applications. The prompt and proper erection of signs at the locations and positions determined by District Traffic Operations is a District Maintenance responsibility. Traffic Operations should be as specific as practicable in sign locations specifying station, milepost or distance from a known point. Maintenance may make minor adjustments in sign location or position to meet field conditions such as underground utilities or sight line restrictions, but must notify Traffic Operations of any significant changes to the sign location.
- (5) Maintenance - Once signs are installed, it shall be a continuing responsibility of District Maintenance to replace damaged, missing, obsolete, and worn signs in a timely manner. Replacement normally shall be in the same location and position as initially established by District Traffic Operations or as prescribed in construction plans. If the nature of sign damage suggests a significant relocation, District Maintenance shall advise District Traffic Operations of the problem and obtain their concurrence with the proposed relocation. District Maintenance may make minor adjustments in location or positioning of signs to meet field conditions. Signs installed by permit must be maintained by the permittee.

Often signs are installed through construction projects and other arrangements, on other system roadways such as city and county roads where they intersect with the State Highway System. These signs include, but are not limited to, stop signs, stop ahead, junction markers and end-maintenance signs. Although these signs are installed by the Department, they serve to control traffic on the cross street. Maintenance of these signs is the responsibility of

the agency having jurisdiction of the local roadway. Updated clearzone standards must be followed if signs undergo major refurbishment, are replaced or relocated. Major refurbishment is where all sign panels are replaced due to end of service life or failure of a component (reflective properties or structural elements). Replacement of a one-panel sign is considered major refurbishment. Minor refurbishment is when sign panels are added to an existing structure, or when panels are replaced, without replacing the entire sign. If the structure must be replaced for any reason, the updated clearzone standards must be followed.

- (6) Sign Orders - District Maintenance units shall normally place all sign orders with the Lake City sign shop that are necessary for 1) replacement in-kind of existing highway signs, and 2) compliance with requests of District Traffic Operations for installation of standard highway signs. District Maintenance units shall also order sign support materials based on the sign support design by the District Structures Office. All non-standard signs and standard signs with unusual legends and/or symbols shall be approved by District Traffic Operations Engineer prior to placing the sign order. Requests for local destination signing shall be evaluated and approved by the District Traffic Operations Engineer. Such signs are erected and maintained by DOT Maintenance. Custom place name signs must comply with the Place Name Sign Section of the Traffic Engineering Manual on the State Highway System.
- (7) Nonofficial Signs - Signs that are not in compliance with the approved standards or that have not been authorized by the State or District Traffic Operations Engineer shall not be erected, used, operated, or maintained within the right-of-way of any highway on the State Highway System nor will such signs be authorized by permit. District Maintenance or Right-of-way forces shall remove existing unauthorized or nonconforming signs located within the State Highway right-of-way.
- (8) System Surveillance - The prompt reporting of missing, damaged, or worn official signs is essential to a high level of service and maintenance. All Department employees are encouraged to report highway signing defects.

Procedure Topic No. 850-055-025, Single and Multi-Post Sign Inspection, establishes written procedure for routine surveillance of the State Highway System for missing, damaged, or worn official signs. The District Maintenance Engineer shall develop and implement an appropriate program to carry out this surveillance procedure. During this sign

review all signs suspected as being non-standard or containing out-of-date legends should be submitted to the District Traffic Operations Engineer.

Suggestions or reports - regardless of source - calling for new signing or changes, removal, or relocation of existing signing, shall be submitted in writing to the District Traffic Operations Engineer for investigation, analysis and response. District Traffic Operations shall be responsible for the sign design and the District Structures Office shall be responsible for the design of the sign supports and the structural adequacy analysis.

- (9) Exceptions - This procedure does not cover signing under the Specific Motorist Information (Logo) or Outdoor Advertising programs. Activities under these programs are administered and coordinated by the Office of Right-of-Way. However, the provisions of paragraph (7) herein are to ensure a coordinated effort among district personnel for removal of illegal, unauthorized, or nonconforming signing within the State Highway right-of-way.

Please ensure that appropriate district and central office personnel are thoroughly familiar with these highway signing responsibilities.

TRAINING:

No training is required.

FORMS:

No forms are required.