

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20591

June 29, 1967

INSTRUCTIONAL MEMORANDUM 21-11-67 (1)  
30-01

Subject: Safety Provisions for Roadside Features and Appurtenances

This memorandum is issued as a supplement to Instructional Memorandum 21-11-67 dated May 19, 1967, and is intended to clarify the interpretation and the application of IM 21-11-67.

In the design of all projects the safety features in the AASHO special report (yellow book) should be considered to the extent practicable and feasible. For application of the cited safety features, high-speed highways include all projects on the Interstate System and all projects on the remaining Federal-aid Primary and Secondary Systems where the design speed is 50 mph or more, and where the current ADT is 750 or more. (The value 750 ADT is taken from the AASHO traffic grouping in the publication Geometric Design Standards for Highways Other Than Freeways. In States where under their own criteria these groupings break at a different value than 750 ADT, the Division Engineer may use a somewhat higher value.)

On most work in urban areas, particularly where curbed city street sections are involved, there are practical limitations to the application of the February 1967 report findings. Similarly, on rural Secondary highways and on some Primary routes the existing right-of-way width is a definite limit as to the extent that side slopes can be flattened and roadside clearance obtained. In these situations it is expected that the desired smooth and obstacle-free roadside will be obtained to the extent feasible in the space available. On open highway sections use is to be made of properly designed guardrail installation as a protection against those roadside features which cannot be otherwise corrected or removed. On curbed street sections, where operating speeds usually will be well below those related to 50 mph design speed, new construction should incorporate lateral clearance to trees, utility poles, etc. as great as reasonably consistent with the border width.

(over)

It is not expected the Federal-aid highway program will be significantly disrupted in accomplishing the purposes of this undertaking. The State and the Bureau should review plans still being prepared to determine where changes can be made which will accomplish these safety purposes with a reasonable expenditure of time and money. The review should be made on a project by project basis, taking into account the status of route development on adjacent segments of the highway, and determining whether objectionable roadside features can be (a) eliminated from the design, (b) removed to the recommended clearance, or (c) guarded by properly designed railing for the motorists' protection.

Where agreement is not reached between the State and the Bureau Division Engineer on the design details, the State may ask that its reasons for requesting an exception be submitted to the Regional Administrator for his determination of the action to be taken. These exceptions need not be referred to the Washington office.

For all projects to be approved after July 31, 1967, it is a requirement that the design will not allow existing bridges to remain in place that have a lesser width than the full width of the approach traveled-way, except as waiver is approved by the Director of Public Roads.

Secondary projects programed before July 31, 1967, and placed under actual construction status prior to January 1, 1968, in accordance with the present State's Secondary Road Plan will be accepted when satisfactorily completed.

Instructions are being issued separately requesting the submission of a supplement to the States' Secondary Road Plans to incorporate the applicable provisions of this safety program.

The program purpose, simply stated, is to modify the designs still being prepared, to make changes in going construction contracts, or to modify completed projects; all to the end of removing roadside elements which have proven to be hazardous, or introducing a measure of protection between these elements and the traveled-way on the highway. This objective will require some difficult engineering decisions for the judicious use of public funds and a considerable application of common sense and devotion to the main objective of safe highway operation.



F. C. Turner  
Director of Public Roads