

DATE: October 30, 1997

TO: Bridge & Roadway Design
FROM: Robert L. Walters, Assistant Chief Engineer-Design
SUBJECT: Vertical Clearance on Interstate Routes

By letter of September 25, 1997 (copy attached), the FHWA has advised that all vertical clearance design exceptions on the Interstate must be coordinated with the Military Traffic Management Command Transportation Engineering Agency. The FHWA Division Office will handle this coordination for us.

Effective immediately, all exceptions to Interstate vertical clearance criteria should be sent to my office for handling with FHWA.

Attachment

cc: Deputy Director & Chief Engineer
Assistant Chief Engineer - Operations



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
 Arkansas Division
 700 West Capitol Avenue, Room 3130
 Little Rock, AR 72201-3298

September 25, 1997

IN REPLY REFER TO:
 Design Exceptions for Vertical
 Clearance on the Interstate
 System
 HFO-AR
 6040

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SEP 25 1997

Asst. Chief Engr - Design

Mr. Dan Flowers, Director
 Arkansas State Highway and
 Transportation Department
 Little Rock, Arkansas

Dear Mr. Flowers:

I have enclosed an August 15, 1997, memorandum from the Associate Administrator for Program Development which outlines FHWA policy regarding the coordination of vertical clearance design exceptions over the interstate system. The policy is effective immediately.

The memorandum recognizes that coordination with the Military Traffic Management Command Transportation Engineering Agency (MTMCTEA) can be accomplished by either the FHWA Division Office or the State Highway Agency when the State has approval authority for design exceptions under 23 U.S.C. 106(b). The Project Oversight Plan adopted by the AHTD and approved by FHWA recognizes that the Deputy Director and Chief Engineer has this authority for those projects which the AHTD has oversight responsibility.

However, when 23 CFR 625 was revised to establish federal standards for all work on the National Highway System regardless of funding sources, Mr. Robert Walters and I discussed this change and agreed that all design exceptions on the interstate system would be discussed with the Division Office. Since this practice is in place, I have also discussed this new policy with Mr. Walters and he agrees that it would be beneficial for the Division Office to coordinate all required actions with the MTMCTEA. Practically speaking there would be very few actions although the new policy encompasses types of activity than new construction which will create substandard clearances.

Questions about this policy should be directed to me.

2: Dep Dir - Design
 Asst Engr - Planning
 Asst Ch Engr - Design
 TAC
 P&E
 Admin.
 Enclosure
 TAC
 JCC

Sincerely yours,

Carl G. Kraehmer

Carl G. Kraehmer
 Field Operations Engineer

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SEP 26 1997

PROGRAMS & CONTRACTS
 A.H.T.O.

there have been a few changes made to STRAHNET. These changes have been coordinated with the States and the field offices. Maps delineating the changes were distributed to the affected regional offices by HEP-10. The STRAHNET is a system of highways that provides defense access, continuity and emergency capabilities for movements of personnel and equipment in both peacetime and wartime. The STRAHNET was based on quantifiable DOD requirements, addressing their peacetime, wartime, strategic, and oversize/overweight highway demands. The network consists of approximately 96 000 kilometers of highway. The STRAHNET has been incorporated into the National Highway System (NHS). Almost 75 percent of the system in the continental United States (about 70 000 kilometers) consists of roadways on the Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways.

The currently established procedures require the FHWA to coordinate with the MTMCTEA when a clear height of structures of less than 4.9 meters is created as the result of a construction project or the project does not provide for the correction of existing substandard vertical clearance on the 41 842-kilometer priority network prior to approving the exception. For routes not on the priority network, coordination is not required although the FHWA policy provides that the MTMCTEA be notified of all exceptions to vertical clearance on the remainder of the Interstate System. The approval action for exceptions to vertical clearance has been delegated to the field offices, which can contact the MTMCTEA directly. When the State highway agency (SHA) has approval authority for design exceptions under one of the 23 U.S.C. 106(b) exemption provisions, coordination with the MTMCTEA is still required and may be accomplished through the FHWA or directly with the MTMCTEA.

* The development of the STRAHNET, the establishment of Power Projection Platforms, base realignments, and the evolving role of the military have created a need to revise coordination procedures between the MTMCTEA and the FHWA, concerning exceptions to the vertical clearance requirements on the Interstate System. Therefore, the FHWA and the MTMCTEA have agreed that all exceptions to the 4.9-meter vertical clearance standard for the rural (Interstate) and the single routing in urban areas, whether it is a new construction project, a project that does not provide for correction of an existing substandard condition, or a project which creates a substandard condition at an existing structure, will be coordinated with the MTMCTEA beginning upon receipt of this memorandum. This agreement

Article

extends to the full roadway width including shoulders for the through lanes, as well as ramps and collector-distributor roadways in Interstate-to-Interstate interchanges. This change in effect eliminates the 41 842-kilometer priority network as a separate subset of the Interstate System. The revised coordination procedures do not change the standards adopted for the Interstate enumerated in "A Policy on Design Standards - Interstate System," AASHTO, July 1991, or the delegations of authority in FHWA Order M1100.1A.

A number of toll roads are part of STRAHNET by virtue of being incorporated into the Interstate System under the former provisions of Section 129(b) of Title 23, United States Code. While the FHWA does not have any particular "leverage" on the toll authorities to comply with Federal standards on non-federally funded projects, it is expected that the SHA's have established appropriate procedures to assure that proposed changes or alterations of the toll road will meet applicable policies established for the Interstate System. The working relationship should ensure the needs of the military are considered and that necessary coordination occurs.

A request for coordination may be forwarded to the MTMCTEA at any time during project development prior to taking any action on the design exception. It should include a time period of 10 working days (after receipt) for action on the request. The office initiating a request for coordination to the MTMCTEA should verify receipt of the request by telephone or fax. If the MTMCTEA does not respond within the time frame, the FHWA should conclude that the MTMCTEA does not have any concerns with the proposed exception. If comments are forthcoming, the FHWA and the SHA will consider mitigation to the extent feasible.

A request for coordination should be addressed to:

Director
Military Traffic Management Command
Transportation Engineering Agency (MTMCTEA)
ATTN: MITE-SA
720 Thimble Shoals Boulevard, Suite 130
Newport News, VA 23606-2574
(Telephone: 757-599-1117, Fax: 757-599-1560)

9/10/64

The Federal-Aid Policy Guide, Non-regulatory Supplement,
23 CFR 625, Paragraph 7 of Transmittal 13 dated July 21, 1995,
will be revised as appropriate at the earliest opportunity.
Questions regarding this memorandum should be directed to
William A. Prosser at 202-366-1332, or Robert C. Schlicht at
202-366-1317.


Thomas J. Ptak

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