



Illinois Department of Transportation

2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Springfield, Illinois / 62764

January 25, 2012

CIRCULAR LETTER 2012-03

STATUS OF MUTCD COMPLIANCE DATE RULEMAKING

COUNTY ENGINEERS/SUPERINTENDENTS OF HIGHWAYS
MUNICIPAL ENGINEERS/DIRECTORS OF PUBLIC WORKS/MAYORS
CONSULTING ENGINEERS

On August 31, 2011, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published a Notice of Proposed Amendment that proposed to eliminate, revise, or extend existing compliance dates for traffic control devices in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). See Circular Letter 2011-14. The attached FHWA memorandum provides an updated status of the rulemaking.

The current MUTCD requires agencies to identify their assessment or management method used to maintain the minimum retroreflectivity requirements by January 22, 2012. In this memorandum, FHWA is recommending "state and local agencies should focus their efforts on long-range planning for the maintenance and upgrade of existing traffic control devices, rather than focusing on compliance dates that may be extended or eliminated." Regardless of the compliance date issue, the department still recommends agencies decide on the assessment or management method that will work best for the local public agency as soon as possible. Furthermore, agencies should use the 2009 MUTCD requirements when installing new signs or replacing existing signs.

Please contact the Local Policy Unit at dot.LocalPolicy@illinois.gov with any questions about this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darrell Lewis".

Darrell W. Lewis, P. E.
Acting Engineer of Local Roads and Streets

Attachment



Memorandum

Subject: **INFORMATION:** Status of MUTCD
Compliance Dates Rulemaking

Date: JAN 20 2012

From: 
Jeffrey A. Lindley
Associate Administrator for Operations

In Reply Refer To:
HOTO-1

To: Directors of Field Services
Federal Lands Highway Division Engineers
Division Administrators

On August 31, 2011, FHWA published a Notice of Proposed Amendment (NPA) that proposed to eliminate, revise, or extend existing compliance dates for traffic control devices in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (MUTCD). The comment period for the NPA closed on October 31, 2011. The FHWA is currently analyzing the comments received and expects to publish the final rule in the summer of 2012.

Until then, State and local agencies should focus their efforts on long-range planning for the maintenance and upgrade of existing traffic control devices, rather than focusing on compliance dates that may be extended or eliminated.

In advance of the publication of the final rule, FHWA Division Offices are likely to receive inquiries from the public concerning the status of this rulemaking. Please use this memorandum to further clarify the status of the MUTCD compliance dates rulemaking.

In the NPA, FHWA proposed to eliminate the compliance dates for 46 items (8 that had already expired and 38 that had future compliance dates) and to extend and/or revise the dates for 4 items. The vast majority of the comments that FHWA received were supportive of the NPA proposal, particularly the proposal to eliminate or revise certain compliance dates. The changes proposed in the NPA were intended to provide State and local governments with the flexibility to allocate scarce financial resources based on local conditions and the useful service lives of traffic control devices. The changes also were intended to reduce the costs and impacts of compliance dates on State and local highway agencies and to streamline and simplify the information in the 2009 MUTCD.

The FHWA is completing its analysis of the comments received and intends to provide flexibility and reduce costs and impacts as we prepare the final rule for publication this

summer. It is important to note that the Fiscal Year 2012 Appropriations Act prohibits the U.S. Department of Transportation from using funds to enforce compliance dates for certain requirements related to sign retroreflectivity and minimum letter heights for street name signs.

For further information, please contact me at Jeffrey.Lindley@dot.gov or 202-366-9210.

cc:

Associate Administrator for Safety
Associate Administrator for Federal Lands Highway
Director of Technical Services