

Improvement or Replacement of Highway Features on National Highway System

§ 1408

Program Purpose

The Secretary is required to update as appropriate the August 28, 1998, Federal Highway Administration Policy on Implementation of the Transportation Research Board of the National Research Council publication entitled "NCHRP Report 350-Recommended Procedures for the Safety Performance Evaluation of Highway Features" in cooperation with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). The current FHWA/AASHTO Implementation Policy Agreement can be viewed on FHWA's Roadside Hardware website under Policy, Regulations, and Guidelines.

Statutory References SAFETEA-LU Section 1408

Program Features

The Secretary, in cooperation with AASHTO, is required to publish updated guidance regarding the conditions under which States, when choosing to improve or replace highway features on the National Highway System (NHS), should improve or replace such features with highway features that have been tested, evaluated, and found to be acceptable under the guidelines of NCHRP Report 350. The current implementation guidelines require the use of Report 350 hardware for new construction on the NHS and for the replacement of damaged hardware. However, a significant update to Report 350 is nearing completion, at which time an updated implementation guidance and schedule will be needed.

The updated guidance will address those highway features that are covered by the updated NCHRP Report 350 and address the need to replace existing hardware with highway features that have been found to be acceptable under the updated guidelines. This information will be used to determine conditions when features found to be acceptable under the updated guidelines must be used and when appurtenances that met the NCHRP 350 guidelines can be installed or retained. In determining these conditions, the guidance will consider the type of highway features, cost-effectiveness, and the practicality of replacement with highway features acceptable under the guidelines of the updated NCHRP Report 350.

Funding

No separate funding is provided.

Implementation

The NCHRP Report 350 update should be completed in 2006. AASHTO, through its Technical Committee for Roadside Safety (TCRS), intends to publish the updated guidelines as a formal AASHTO Guide. The Guide will be developed through the TCRS by Fall 2007, approved by ballot by 2/3 of the AASHTO member states, and approved through the Standing Committee on Highways, by Spring 2008. Concurrently, members from the AASHTO TCRS and FHWA will develop the implementation guidance document required by §1408 to be included with the ballot so the State Departments of Transportation can immediately assess the overall impact on their operations resulting from adoption of the new crashworthiness guidelines.

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