



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE.
Washington, DC 20590

November 14, 2007

In Reply Refer To: HOTO-1

Ms. Alisa Albers
Information Operations Analyst
IO & Cyberspace Campaign
Lockheed Martin IS&GS
alisa.albers@lmco.com

Dear Ms. Albers:

Thank you for your e-mail of November 8 requesting an official interpretation of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (MUTCD). Specifically, you asked for an interpretation of the sign "No Turn on Red When Pedestrians Are Present" in regard to what the "when pedestrians are present" constraint entails (i.e., what is present?).

The precise meaning of the term "when pedestrians are present" is not addressed by the MUTCD. The legal requirements for drivers in response to a regulatory sign with this message are addressed by the State motor vehicle statutes or by the local law or regulation that authorizes the posting of a regulatory sign with such a legend.

The MUTCD does not contain a sign with the legend "No Turn on Red When Pedestrians Are Present." The only signs in the MUTCD for prohibiting turns on red after stopping are the R10-11, R10-11a, and R10-11b signs (with the legend "No Turn on Red") and the supplemental R10-20a plaque (with times of day and days of the week) that are shown in Figure 2B-19. The text and figures of the current 2003 edition of the MUTCD can be viewed online at **<http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov>**.

The Federal Highway Administration does not encourage the use of "When Pedestrians Are Present" legends with No Turn on Red signs, because the meaning is vague and there is an inherent lack of clearly defined criteria for enforcement. A 2001 study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety found that signs prohibiting right turns on red during specified hours were very effective in terms of driver compliance but signs giving drivers discretion to turn right on red based on whether pedestrians are present were not effective because the vague message makes enforcement difficult.

It should be noted that in Part 7 of the MUTCD, which deals with traffic control devices for school areas, Figure 7B-1 illustrates a plaque (S4-2) with the legend "When Children Are Present" as one of several plaques that can be used with a School Speed Limit Sign to indicate the specific periods when a special school speed limit is in effect. We believe this is acceptable

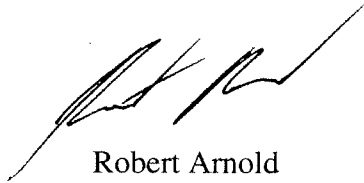
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because it is less vague for enforcement purposes. A driver seeing one or more school children walking along a sidewalk or at a school crossing can easily determine that the special reduced school speed limit is in effect.

I hope this information satisfactorily addresses your inquiry. We have assigned the following official ruling number to your request: "2-635 (I) – When Pedestrians Are Present." Please refer to this number in any future correspondence.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Arnold', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Robert Arnold
Director, Office of Transportation
Operations