



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

400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

October 27, 2004.

Refer to: HOTO-1

Mr. Lawrence T. Hagen
Program Director
Center for Urban Transportation Research
University of South Florida
4202 East Fowler Avenue, CUT 100
Tampa, FL 33620-5375

Dear Mr. Hagen:

This is in response to your August 24 email requesting an interpretation of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) as to whether automatic gates can be installed as traffic control devices at highway-busway grade crossings. Upon receiving your email, Ms. Guan Xu of my staff communicated with you and you provided information regarding the Miami-Dade busway grade crossings, to which you will apply this interpretation specifically.

Automatically or manually operated gates, installed and operated under authorization of a public agency to control traffic on public streets, are traffic control devices. As traffic control devices, gates may be used for traffic controls at highway-busway grade crossings. The decision to use traffic control gates at a particular location should be based on engineering study or judgment.

When used, traffic control gates must be designed and operated in conformance with the provisions in the MUTCD. The current edition of the MUTCD provides standards for gates used for traffic control at movable bridges in Section 4I.02 and at highway-rail grade crossings in Section 8D.04. If design and operations of the gates at highway-busway grade crossings do not fully comply with the MUTCD standards, then a request for permission to experiment must be submitted to this Office for an approval, in accordance with MUTCD Section 1A.10.

For reference purposes, we have assigned your request the following official interpretation number and title: 8-69(I)–"Traffic Gates for Busway Crossing, USF-Florida." Please refer to this number in future correspondence. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Ms. Xu at 202-366-5892.

Sincerely yours,

for Regina S. McElroy
Director, Office of Transportation
Operations

cc: Mr. Alberto N. Parjus, Assistant Director, Bus Services, Miami Dade Transit
Mr. Robert B. Williams, Traffic Signals & Signs Division, Miami Dade Public Works
Mr. Rory Santana, District Traffic Operations Engineer, FL DOT
Mr. Lap T. Hoang, State Traffic Operations Engineer, FL DOT

cc: Mr. Roger Wentz, ATSSA



Xu, Guan

From: Wainwright, Scott
Sent: Monday, August 16, 2004 4:21 PM
To: 'Hagen, Larry'
Cc: Xu, Guan; Huckaby, Ernest
Subject: RE: Request for Interpretation

Hi, Larry

Right after the ITE meeting in Orlando, left on a family vacation to Vermont. Today's my first day back.

I'm forwarding your message to Ms. Guan Xu, who handles Parts 8 and 10 of the MUTCD. She can work with you on this question.

Hope you didn't sustain any "Charley" damage in the Orlando area!

Scott

-----Original Message-----

From: Hagen, Larry [mailto:hagen@cutr.usf.edu]
Sent: Monday, August 16, 2004 3:37 PM
To: Wainwright, Scott
Cc: Baltus, Mike; Hinebaugh, Dennis
Subject: Request for Interpretation

Scott,

Hope you had a good trip back from the ITE meeting in Orlando.

I would greatly appreciate your guidance with the project that I mentioned out in Anaheim where we are looking at the potential use of gates for crossings of the Miami-Dade busway. I believe that a dedicated busway route functions similarly to a light rail crossing, and as such, it would make sense to have similar traffic control devices.

You indicated that there is really nothing in the MUTCD that would preclude the use of gates for this purpose. However, some of the review agencies are of the opinion that since gates are only mentioned in the manual in relation to heavy and light rail crossings, that exclusively is their intended application.

To clarify this issue, I am considering a formal request for interpretation. Do you think that is the appropriate route to go? With all of the interest in bus rapid transit across the nation, I would think that this would be a timely interpretation for many agencies. I would think that since gates are a well-established device with a long history of effective use at railroad crossings, that a request to experiment would not be the appropriate route to take.

would appreciate your thoughts on this,

Larry Hagen

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"Dream lofty dreams, and as you dream, so shall you become. Your vision is the promise of what you shall one day be; your ideal is the prophecy of what you shall at last unveil." - James Allen

God's instructions to traffic engineers: "Set up road signs; put up guideposts. Take note of the highway, the road that you take."
Jeremiah 31:21