



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

MAY - 1 2012

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

In Reply Refer To: HOTO-1

Mr. Roger A. Wentz
President & CEO
American Traffic Safety Services Association
15 Riverside Parkway, Suite 100
Fredericksburg, VA 22406-1022

Dear Mr. Wentz:

Thank you for your letter of March 8 requesting an interpretation of the 2009 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) regarding the shape of the hand signaling devices used by flaggers in temporary traffic control zones and by adult crossing guards in school areas. Specifically, you are asking if a STOP/SLOW paddle that uses octagonal sign images placed on a circular sign substrate would be compliant with Paragraph 2 of Section 6E.03 and Paragraph 3 of Section 7D.05.

It is the Federal Highway Administration's official interpretation that the Standard statements in both of these sections clearly state that the paddle (not the sign image on the paddle) shall have an octagonal shape. This requires the sign substrate to be octagonal, thereby conveying the most restrictive message of this device. The unique octagonal shape is reserved for the STOP message and is used in all cases where the approaching motorist must stop. The shape is recognizable under most lighting conditions and would be compromised if the substrate is allowed to be circular.

For recordkeeping purposes, we have assigned the following official interpretation number and title: "6(09)-013 (I) – Use of a Circular Sign Substrate for a STOP/SLOW Paddle." Please refer to this number in any future correspondence regarding this topic.

Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention. Please contact Mr. Ken Wood at ken.wood@dot.gov if you have any further questions concerning this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Mark R. Kehrl
Director, Office of Transportation
Operations