



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

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

AUG 17 2010

In Reply Refer to:
HOTO-1

Mr. Tom Hicks, P.E.
Director
Office of Traffic and Safety
State Highway Administration
Maryland Department of Transportation
7491 Connelley Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076

Dear Mr. Hicks:

Thank you for your July 8 letter requesting clarification regarding the required and allowable use of higher fines signs and plaques within school zones as provided for in Chapter 7B of the 2009 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

The FHWA has reviewed your letter and the applicable provisions in Sections 7B.10 and 7B.15, and it is the FHWA's official interpretation that only one sign or plaque to inform motorists that traffic violations are subject to higher fines is required in each direction of travel through a school area as follows:

- If other traffic violations in addition to exceeding the speed limit are subject to higher fines, the installation of a Fines Higher (R2-6P, R2-6aP, or R2-6bP) plaque beneath the School Zone (S1-1) sign provides sufficient notice to road users and will be the only sign or plaque that is required. However, if the portion of the roadway that is subject to higher fines does not begin at the location of the S1-1 sign, a BEGIN HIGHER FINES ZONE (R2-10) sign shall be placed at the point where the higher fines begin, and the placement of a Fines Higher (R2-6P, R2-6aP, or R2-6bP) plaque beneath the School Zone (S1-1) sign is optional (see Figure 7B-2).
- If exceeding the speed limit is the only traffic violation that is subject to higher fines, the installation of a Fines Higher (R2-6P, R2-6aP, or R2-6bP) plaque beneath the Speed Limit (R2-1) sign or the School Speed Limit (S5-1) sign will be the only sign or plaque that is required. The authority to install a Fines Higher (R2-6P, R2-6aP, or R2-6bP) plaque beneath a Speed Limit (R2-1) sign in a school area where a reduced school speed limit zone has not been established is provided in Paragraph 1 of Section 2B.17. If exceeding the speed limit is the only traffic violation that is subject to higher fines, it would not be appropriate to also install a Fines Higher (R2-6P, R2-6aP, or R2-6bP)



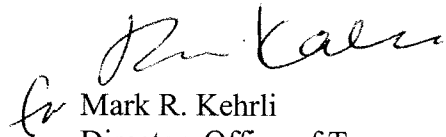
plaque beneath the School Zone (S1-1) sign because this plaque would create the false impression that other traffic violations are also subject to higher fines.

For recordkeeping purposes, we have assigned the following official interpretation number and title: "7(09)-3 (I) – Higher Fines Signs and Plaques in School Areas." Please refer to this number in any future correspondence regarding this topic.

If you have further questions, please contact Mr. Fred Ranck at 708-283-3545.

Thank you for your interest in improving the clarity of the provisions contained in the MUTCD.

Sincerely yours,


Mark R. Kehrli
Director, Office of Transportation
Operations