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ENGINEERING INSTRUCTION

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MAINTENANCE AND PROTECTION OF TRAFFIC

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[Signature]
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The purpose of this instruction is to emphasize the importance of continued effort at the Regional Construction Group Level and the Project Level to achieve adequate maintenance and protection of traffic. Since our last Engineering Instruction on this topic, EI 78-11 issued on 3/1/78, a statewide inspection of our projects by FHWA has uncovered the following deficiencies:

a) Inappropriate and the lack of appropriate signs continues to be a serious problem. Several projects had rectangular warning signs instead of the required diamond-shaped ones. The rectangular signs can only be used as alternates to the diamond-shaped signs when the work involved is of short time duration combined with short length work operations. As such, rectangular signs would generally be considered inappropriate for our projects. In other instances, Stated Speed Signs, W161's, were being used alone, giving the impression of speed limit signs. The use of Stated Speed Signs alone is specifically prohibited by the MUTCD. There were a number of instances of signs being modified by blocking out part of the legend with pieces of wood or changing the legends with paint. Such practice is not to be allowed. There was one instance where an accident was directly attributable to the failure to post a notice of restricted width on a detour. The above cited instances indicate that more attention is warranted by the Regional Construction Group and the Project Engineer to insure that signing is adequate and proper.

b) Delineation is still a problem. In one case, rebars with red flagging were used as delineators. In other cases, EIC's commented that theft and vandalism were the reasons for poor delineation. Such abuses cannot be tolerated. It is the Contractor's responsibility to provide the correct type of delineation device and keep it in place. It is our responsibility to see that the Contractor does what he is being paid to do.

c) Contractors' operations were still found to be in conflict with good safety practices. For instance, materials stored close to moving traffic, equipment being left close to moving traffic overnight, workers parking their cars on shoulders, and project operations being conducted in such a way as to ignore the implications of unprotected fixed objects and missing guide rail. The Project Engineer should be closely monitoring the Contractors' proposed schedule of operations and its resultant impact on project traffic safety. Instances such as those listed above should not be tolerated and the Contractor should be ordered in writing to correct such bad practices.

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d) In some cases the inspection uncovered the fact that safety devices were still being converted to hazards, i.e., Type III barricades being held down with concrete blocks, pavement markings had not been removed or removed in an ineffective or misleading way, and the case of the rebars cited earlier. There is no excuse for such things. In general, not only is it easier but it is also cheaper to do these things correctly and safely.

e) There was a lack of adequate documentation for project inspections related to the maintenance and protection items. In most cases, the inspections had been made and adequate supervision was being exercised; but, this fact was not being documented. We recommend that all Construction Supervisors make a regular practice of checking project diaries for such documentation.

Please instruct your Project Engineers to review the contents of EI 78-11, this EI, the contract requirements, and MUTCD with a view towards improving our overall performance and, specifically, to correct the noted deficiencies.

During the last year, there appeared to have been some confusion over the policy for nighttime inspections, as set forth in EI 78-11. It was apparently thought that our effort to conserve on the use of overtime payments was in conflict with or superseded the need for nighttime inspections. This was not the intent. Although the conservation of overtime effort will continue, we do not intend that any necessary nighttime inspections should be foregone. Any overtime necessary to insure project safety is to be authorized.

We expect that the periodic project visits by the Regional Construction Group Supervisors will emphasize the importance of adequate maintenance of traffic, in all of its aspects, at the project level and especially emphasize the importance of project coordination of traffic control with other projects in the area, including work performed by maintenance forces.