

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Federal Highway Administration****23 CFR Part 655****[FHWA Docket No. FHWA-2001-11159]****RIN 2125-AE93****National Standards for Traffic Control Devices: Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways; Revision****AGENCY:** Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.**ACTION:** Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) is incorporated by reference in 23 CFR part 655, subpart F, approved by the Federal Highway Administration, and recognized as the national standard for traffic control devices used on all public roads. The purpose of this final rule is to revise standards, guidance, options, and supporting information relating to the traffic control devices in all parts of the MUTCD, to expedite traffic, promote uniformity, improve safety, and incorporate technology advances in traffic control device application. The MUTCD, with these changes incorporated, is being designated as the 2003 edition of the MUTCD.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This final rule is effective December 22, 2003. The incorporation by reference of the publication listed in this regulation is approved by the Director of the Office of the Federal Register as of December 22, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Ernest Huckaby, Office of Transportation Operations, Room 3408, (202) 366-9064, or Mr. Raymond Cuprill, Office of the Chief Counsel, Room 4230, (202) 366-0791, U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Office hours are from 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Electronic Access**

This document, the notice of proposed amendments (NPA), and all comments received may be viewed online through the Document Management System (DMS) at <http://dms.dot.gov>. The DMS is available 24 hours each day, 365 days each year. Electronic submission and retrieval help and guidelines are available under the help section of the Web site.

An electronic copy of this document may also be downloaded by using a computer, modem and suitable communications software from the Government Printing Office's Electronic Bulletin Board Service at (202) 512-1661. Internet users may also reach the Office of the Federal Register's home page at: <http://www.archives.gov> and the Government Printing Office's Web page at: <http://www.gpo.gov>.

Background

On May 21, 2002, at 67 FR 35850, the FHWA published a notice of proposed amendments (NPA) proposing revisions to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Those changes were proposed to be designated as Revision No. 2 of the Millennium (2000) edition of the MUTCD. Interested persons were invited to submit comments to FHWA Docket No. FHWA-2001-11159. Based on the comments received and its own experience, the FHWA is issuing a final rule and is designating the MUTCD, with these changes incorporated, as the 2003 Edition of the MUTCD. The FHWA believes that the title "2003 Edition" would be easier for readers to follow rather than the title "Revision No. 2 of the Millennium (2000) edition."

A list of all of the items in this final rule and the text of the 2003 edition of the MUTCD, with these final rule changes incorporated, are available for inspection and copying, as prescribed in 49 CFR part 7, at the FHWA Office of Transportation Operations, Room 3408, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Furthermore, the list of all items in this final rule and the text of the 2003 edition of the MUTCD, with these final rule changes incorporated, are available on the FHWA's MUTCD Internet site <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov>. The previous version of the MUTCD, the 2000 MUTCD with Revision 1 text incorporated is also available on this Internet site. The 2003 edition supersedes all previous editions and revisions of the MUTCD.

Summary of Comments

The FHWA received 293 letters submitted to the docket, containing over 5,000 individual comments on the MUTCD in general or on one or more parts, chapters, sections, or paragraphs contained in the MUTCD. Comments were received from the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (NCUTCD), State Departments of Transportation (DOTs), city and county government agencies, Federal government agencies, consulting firms, private industry, associations, other organizations, and individual private

citizens. The FHWA has reviewed and analyzed all the comments received. The significant comments and summaries of the FHWA's analyses and determinations are discussed below. General comments and significant global changes throughout the MUTCD are discussed first, followed by discussion of significant comments and adopted changes in each of the individual Parts of the MUTCD.

Discussion of Adopted General and Global Changes Throughout the MUTCD

In the NPA, the FHWA proposed designating the changes to the MUTCD as Revision No. 2 of the Millennium (2000) edition of the MUTCD. Comments were received from the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA) and the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) (the three associations who publish the MUTCD in hard-copy book format) and from other individuals opposing this proposed designation as Revision No. 2. The commenters expressed the opinion that the number and extent of changes are too great in scope to be considered a mere revision of the 2000 edition and that the MUTCD, with the changes incorporated, should be designated as a complete new edition of the MUTCD, to minimize user confusion. The commenters also stated that a new graphical design for the cover and title pages of each part of the MUTCD are needed to make the new edition clearly distinguishable by users from earlier editions. The FHWA agrees with these comments and designates the MUTCD, with the adopted final rule changes incorporated, as the 2003 Edition of the MUTCD and also adopts new graphical designs for the cover and title pages of each part of the 2003 MUTCD. The FHWA revises Table I-1 and all page headers to reflect this designation.

Additionally, the FHWA received comments from ITE, ATSSA, traffic engineering consultants and private citizens that the proposed continuation of the 2000 MUTCD's page layout format and graphics formats is inappropriate and that these elements need improvement to adequately serve users. Suggestions included reducing the amount of "white space" on text pages to reduce the total number of pages in the MUTCD, using accurate fonts and letter spacing on illustrations of signs, using more accurate proportioning of lanes and pavement markings on figures, and various other adjustments to graphics to aid in user understanding and to make the figures more accurately reflect the standards,