

Memorandum

Subject: **INFORMATION**: MUTCD – Revised Interim Approval for the use of Automated Flagger Assistance Devices in Temporary Traffic Control Zones (IA-4R)

Date: January 28, 2005

From: Jeffrey F. Paniati
Associate Administrator for Operations

Reply to HOTO-1
Attn. of:

To: Division Administrators
Resource Center Managers
Federal Lands Highway Division Offices

Purpose: The purpose of this memorandum is to issue a revised Interim Approval for the optional use of Automated Flagger Assistance Devices (AFADs) under certain specific conditions in Temporary Traffic Control (TTC) zones to reduce flagger exposure to highway user traffic. In addition to minor changes in the original technical provisions for AFADs in general and for STOP/SLOW AFADs, this revised Interim Approval adds the Red/Yellow Lens AFAD as a second type of AFAD that may be used.

This revised Interim Approval, IA-4R, rescinds the original Interim Approval IA-4 dated December 1, 2004.

Background: AFADs are portable traffic control systems that assist a flagger operation for short-term lane closures, on two-lane highways. The AFADs are used to remove one or both flaggers, in a typical flagging operation, from the traveled way in TTC zones. A flagger(s) can operate an AFAD(s) by using a radio control unit or by using a cable directly attached to the AFAD(s). In either case, the flagger(s) can be positioned well away from the roadway and moving traffic. The primary benefit is to enhance the safety of flaggers, while also maintaining positive control of traffic approaching the TTC zone.

Research on Automated Flagger Assistance Devices: The following three specific AFADs have undergone extensive formal experimentation in accordance with Section 1A.10 of the MUTCD, and have been deemed by FHWA to be successful under the conditions tested:

- "Autoflagger" (a STOP/SLOW AFAD) – Formal Experimentation conducted by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (#6-102 (Ex)).
- "J4 Flagger Workstation" (a STOP/SLOW AFAD) – Formal Experimentation conducted by the Illinois Department of Transportation (6-178 (Ex)).
- "RC Flagman" (a Red/Yellow Lens AFAD) – Formal Experimentation conducted by the Ohio, Missouri, Wisconsin, and Alaska Departments of Transportation (6-103 (Ex), 6-192 (Ex), and 6-195 (Ex)).

The evaluation reports from the DOT agencies involved in the experimentation process for the type of devices defined in this revised Interim Approval include information on the purpose, evaluation method, and key comments resulting from the experimentation with the specific device tested by the agency. Please see the attached document titled "Experimenting Agency Comments on AFADs."

Conditions of Interim Approval: The use of AFADs shall conform to the attached revised technical provisions, which describe the Standards, Guidance, Options, and Support that will govern use of AFADs under this revised Interim Approval. These technical provisions are generic and are intended to govern any and all specific products that currently exist or that may be developed as a STOP/SLOW AFAD or a Red/Yellow Lens AFAD.

Interim Approval for the use of AFADs to improve the safety of flaggers will be granted to any jurisdiction that submits a written request to the Director of the Office of Transportation Operations. A State may request Interim Approval for all jurisdictions in that State. Jurisdictions using devices under an Interim Approval must agree to maintain an inventory list of all locations where the devices are placed and to comply with item F at the bottom of page 1A-6 of the 2003 MUTCD, Section 1A.10, which states:

“An agreement to restore the site(s) of the Interim Approval to a condition that complies with the provisions in this Manual within 3 months following the issuance of a Final Rule on this traffic control device. This agreement must also provide that the agency sponsoring the Interim Approval will terminate use of the device or application installed under the Interim Approval at any time that it determines significant safety concerns are directly or indirectly attributable to the device or application. The FHWA’s Office of Transportation Operations has the right to terminate the interim approval at any time if there is an indication of safety concerns.”

Additional Related Information: The three specific AFADs described above have all received certification from the FHWA Office of Safety as category 4 devices and are therefore currently compliant in accordance with NCHRP 350 "Recommended Procedures for the Safety Performance Evaluation of Highway Features" for the use of traffic control devices on the National Highway System (see MUTCD Section 6F.01). Agencies may determine their applicability for use on other categories of highways under their jurisdiction.

Other AFADs which receive certification by the FHWA Office of Safety as NCHRP 350 compliant and which satisfy the attached technical provisions for AFADs may be used on the National Highway System and other highways as determined by highway agency policy.

It is anticipated that AFADs will be proposed for addition to the MUTCD as a part of the formal rulemaking process for the next edition of the MUTCD, which is currently scheduled to be issued in 2008. This Interim Approval will expire upon issuance of the final rule for the 2008 MUTCD.

Any questions concerning this revised Interim Approval should be directed to Mr. Pete Rusch at peter.rusch@fhwa.dot.gov or by telephone at 708-738-6735.

**Attachments: Technical Provisions for AFADs – Revised 1/27/05
Experimenting Agency Comments on AFADs**

FHWA:HOTO-1:SWainwright:ds:60857:1-27-05

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(DF) IA-4 Automated Flagger Assistance Devices

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