

Mr



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

400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

DEC 1 2005

Refer to: HOTO-1

Commander (ret.) John Hubbs
16274 West Starry Sky Drive
Surprise, AZ 85374

Dear Commander Hubbs:

Thank you for your September 11 letter to Secretary Norman Y. Mineta requesting placement of yellow retroreflective material on the back of STOP signs. Your letter was acknowledged by the Arizona Department of Transportation and forwarded to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for reply.

The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) is the national standard for the design and application of all traffic control devices including highway signs. While the FHWA is responsible for developing the standards contained in the MUTCD, the responsibility for the selection, installation, and maintenance of these devices belongs to State or local highway agencies. The requirements and application of traffic control devices may be found on the FHWA's website <http://mutcd.dot.gov>.

STOP signs provide critical right-of-way and regulatory messages. For this reason, a special shape (octagonal) and special color (white legend and border on a red background) are assigned to the STOP sign to specifically identify it from all other regulatory signs. Very specific requirements are included in the application information for STOP signs to make sure that the octagonal shape is not obscured when viewed from the back. Although the current provisions for the design and application of STOP signs do not include provision for affixing retroreflective sheeting to the back of the stop sign, MUTCD Section 2A.21 does allow placement of a strip of retroreflective material to the sign posts for regulatory and warning signs in situations where there is a need to draw attention to the sign particularly during nighttime conditions. Further, the MUTCD allows the use of Individual LED's in the border and in the legend of signs to improve the conspicuity and increase the legibility of signs. As you can see from this discussion, the FHWA has made a concerted effort to make sure that STOP signs are visible to motorists.

Your request to change the MUTCD to include your suggestion has been denied for the following reasons:

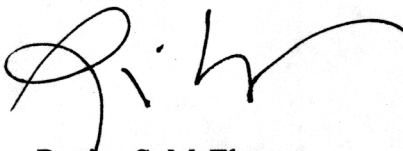
1. A change to the MUTCD must include research to support the change. Your request did not include the necessary supporting research data.
2. A retroreflective strip on the back of the STOP sign could cause motorist confusion regarding the appropriate place to stop. At a stop-controlled intersection, the driver who sees the outline of the back of the supplemental STOP sign located on the far side of the intersection might be confused and actually pass the primary STOP sign.



3. The only sign that can be posted on the back of a STOP sign is a Do Not Enter sign. Placing a retroreflective strip on the back of the STOP sign could compromise the motorist's ability to comprehend the "Do Not Enter" message.

For recordkeeping purposes, we have assigned the following official ruling number and title to this request for change: "Request 2-575(C) - Application of Retroreflective Border on Back of Stop Sign." Please refer to this number in future correspondence. If you need further assistance, please contact Mr. Fred Ranck at 708-283-3545 or Ms. Linda L. Brown at 202-366-2192.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. S. McElroy', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Regina S. McElroy
Director, Office of Transportation
Operations

cc: Mr. Roger Wentz, ATSSA