



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

April 27, 2005

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

Refer to: HOTO-1

Mr. Kurt Latt
Senior Transportation Engineer
Traffic Engineering Division
City of Bellevue
P.O. Box 90012
Bellevue, W A 98009-9012

Dear Mr. Latt:

Thank you for your March 21 letter, requesting an interpretation of Section 3 B.17 of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) regarding the use of retroreflective colored pavement treatments. Specifically, you asked whether colored pavement treatments such as "StreetPrint DuraTherm" may be used, either with or without the normal transverse white lines of a crosswalk, to establish a legal crosswalk consistent with the MUTCD.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has issued two Official Interpretations of the MUTCD that address your question. Copies of interpretations numbered 3-152(1) and 3-169(1) are enclosed for your reference.

These two interpretations basically indicate that:

- . The white lines prescribed by MUTCD Section 3B.17 are necessary to establish a "marked" crosswalk. An unmarked crosswalk may exist legally at an intersection, giving pedestrians certain legal rights, but it does not afford pedestrians or approaching road users with the benefits of a visual indication of a crosswalk. The decision to provide a marked crosswalk at a given location is based on engineering studies and judgment.
- . Non-retroreflective colored pavement within the marked crosswalk lines for the purpose of decoration only is not considered to be a traffic control device, but the color of the pavement surface within the crosswalk should not degrade the contrast of the white crosswalk lines nor be potentially mistaken by road users as a traffic control application (i.e., to guide, warn, or regulate traffic).
- . Use of retroreflective colored pavement within the marked crosswalk lines is considered a traffic control device because it is obviously intended to communicate a traffic control message by enhancing the visibility of the crosswalk. However, such use is not compliant with the current edition of the MUTCD, which only provides for the use of diagonal or longitudinal white lines to provide enhanced visibility of a marked crosswalk.



A jurisdiction desiring to use colored retroreflective markings within the crosswalk lines would need to request FHWA experimentation approval in accordance with Section I A.10, including a plan to evaluate the effects.

- Use of either non-retroreflective or retroreflective colored pavement treatments without the white crosswalk lines specified by Section 3B.17, in a manner that would suggest to pedestrians or drivers that it is a "marked" crosswalk, is not in compliance with the MUTCD. The MUTCD specifically allows only certain patterns of white lines and bars for the purpose of communicating the message of a marked crosswalk to road users.

In summary, it is our interpretation that all of the examples of "StreetPrint DuraTherm" crosswalk pavement treatments shown in the photographs included with your letter are not in compliance with the MUTCD. If the City of Bellevue wishes to use these or similar types of markings, it is necessary to request experimentation approval from FHWA as per Section I A.10 of the MUTCD.

Thank you for writing on this subject. If you have any questions, please call Mr. Scott W. Wainwright of our staff at 202-366-0857. Please note that we have assigned your request the following official interpretation number and title: "3-1 78(I)-Retroreflective Colored Pavement - Additional Clarification." Please refer to this number in any future correspondence.

Sincerely yours,

Director, Office of Transportation
Operation

2 Enclosures