

US. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Highway  
Administration**

400 Seventh St., SW.  
Washington, D.C 20590

June 29, 2001

Refer to: HOTO-1

Mr. J. M. Lynch  
State Traffic Engineer  
North Carolina Department of Transportation  
1561 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1561

Dear Mr. Lynch:

Thank you for your May 29 letter concerning your request for an interpretation of Section 4D.04 of the 2000 edition of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), regarding right-turn-on-red. In addition, you requested a change to Section 4D.05 of the MUTCD.

Section 4D.04, Meaning of Vehicular Signal Indications, states, "Unless other wise determined by law, the following meanings shall be given to highway traffic signal indications. . ." Later in the Section, "Vehicular traffic facing a steady RED ARROW signal indication shall not enter the intersection to make the movement indicated by the arrow (except as described in the Option below)..." The Option part of this Section states, "Where turns are allowed on red and the signal indication is an arrow, a sign may be used to indicate that turns are allowed on red after stopping. "

As you described in your letter, the motor vehicle laws of the North Carolina allow a right-turn-on-RED ARROW except when a sign is in place prohibiting the movement. We interpret North Carolina's policy of allowing right-turn-on-RED-ARROW except when a sign prohibits the movement to be in conformance with the MUTCD because this is allowed in the motor vehicle laws of the North Carolina.

However, the intent of this Section of the MUTCD is that a RED ARROW be used to indicate to motorists that they are not permitted to turn right on red. Since the 2000 MUTCD will be the standard for most of the country, we urge the North Carolina Department of Transportation (DOT) to work with the State legislature to change the motor vehicle laws to be in sync with the 2000 MUTCD. We also urge the North Carolina DOT to develop a plan to gradually install signs in places where right-turn-on-RED ARROW is allowed.

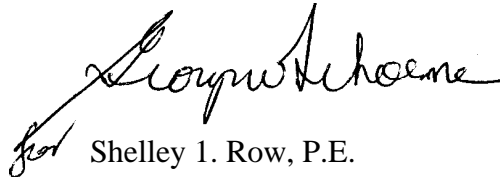
In Section 4D.05, Application of Steady Signal Indications, we are aware of the omission of a reference to the option to use a sign permitting turns after stopping for a steady RED ARROW. We intend to propose language in this fall's notice of proposed amendment to make Section 4D.05 consistent with Section 4D.04 on this issue.

You requested that the Federal Highway Administration include the phrase, "Unless otherwise determined by law" in Section 4D.05 to be consistent in both the meaning and application of signal indications. We will take your suggestion under consideration for future changes to the Manual. Our website address is <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov>, please check our site this fall or the Federal Register website for an opportunity to comment on the proposed revisions at [http://www.access.gpo.gov/su\\_docs/fedreg/frcont01.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fedreg/frcont01.html).

For the purposes of recordkeeping, we have assigned your request to change the MUTCD the following name and number, "Right- Turn-on-RED ARROW, 4-230(I)."

We appreciate your taking the time to write us with your concerns regarding Sections 4D.04 and 4D.05 of the MUTCD. It is through efforts of professionals like yourself that we are able to provide appropriate standards, guidance and options for the transportation engineering profession.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shelley I. Row". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Shelley I. Row, P.E.  
Director, Office of Transportation  
Operations