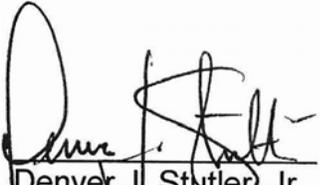


Approved:



Denver J. Stutler, Jr., P.E.
Secretary

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Office: Traffic Engineering & Operations

Topic No.: 750-010-027-h

ESTABLISHING SCHOOL ZONES AND SCHOOL CROSSINGS

PURPOSE:

To define the criteria and standards to be used in establishing school zones and school crossings on the State Highway System roadways that surround schools, both public and private.

AUTHORITY:

Sections 316.75, 316.1895, 318.21, 1006.21, 1006.23, 1013.36, 334.03 and 335.10, Florida Statutes (F.S.)

Rule 14-15.010, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

SCOPE:

Offices affected by this procedure are State Traffic Engineering and Operations, District Traffic Operations, Roadway Design, Maintenance, and State and District Safety offices.

REFERENCES:

Florida School Crossing Guard Guidelines: Available from the Florida Department of Transportation, Safety Office, 605 Suwannee Street, M.S. 82, Tallahassee, FL, 32399-0450.

Design Standards: These standards are published by the Department's Roadway Design Office and are available from the Florida Department of Transportation, Maps and Publications, 605 Suwannee Street, M.S. 12, Tallahassee, FL, 32399-0450.

School Trip Safety Program Guidelines: Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE).

Traffic Regulation Approval Process, Topic No. 750-010-011.

DEFINITIONS:

School Area. Those streets and highways abutting the grounds of an active educational institution that includes school property. Only streets and highways that are adjacent to a school are included in the school area.

School Zone. That portion of a street or highway located within a school area that is subject to a reduced speed limit at certain times of the day. A school zone is defined by traffic control devices and normally adjacent to the school property. It may be established at other locations when justified by an engineering study. School zones are not to be applied in a blanket manner for all streets and highways within a school area.

School Crossing. An official school student crossing on an adopted school route plan of a school safety program. Any crossing not so officially designated is termed a "pedestrian crossing."

GENERAL:

School zones are intended to protect the safety of students. However, analysis has shown that at many locations, the traffic controls requested are unnecessary, costly, and tend to lessen respect for controls that are warranted. Regardless of the school location, safe and effective traffic control can best be obtained through uniform application of policies, practices, and standards developed through engineering studies.

1. ELIGIBLE SCHOOL ZONE LOCATIONS

- 1.1 Only public or private elementary, middle schools (Jr. High), or federally funded Headstart facilities providing a full-time educational program are eligible for the markings, signs, and other traffic control devices referenced in **Section 4.1**.
- 1.2 Except as noted in **Section 1.1**, other educational institutions and facilities are not eligible for the traffic control devices referenced in **Section 4.1**. These include universities, vocational technical schools, junior colleges, community colleges, nursery schools, high schools, and day cares. These institutions may be considered for other types of traffic control devices such as pedestrian crossing signs or warning signs for a playground or driveway entrance.

Traffic control devices are not normally needed at a high school, but when special circumstances occur, they should be addressed on a case-by-case basis, only used when needed, and justified by an engineering study.

2. SCHOOL ZONE SPEED REGULATIONS

- 2.1 As stated in **Section 316.1895(5), F.S.**, "A school zone speed limit may not be less than 15 miles per hour except by local regulation. No school zone speed limit shall be more than 20 miles per hour in an urbanized area, as defined in **Section 334.03, F.S.** Such speed limit may be in force only during those times 30 minutes before, during, and 30 minutes after the periods of time when pupils are arriving at a regularly scheduled breakfast program or a regularly scheduled school session and leaving a regularly scheduled school session."
- 2.2 School zone speeds are selected on the basis of an engineering analysis of the specific site. The analysis should include a vehicle spot speed study and a pedestrian group size study. Also, a vehicle gap size study should be done to document the length of time needed for adequate gaps in traffic and the number of adequate gaps occurring when children are present at the crossing under review.
- 2.3 When school speed zones are warranted, a speed regulation should be established in accordance with the **Traffic Regulation Approval Process, Topic Number 750-010-011.**
- 2.4 Upon a request from the local government, a reduced speed zone will be used at school crossings at signalized intersections at locations adjacent to or near school property if justified by an engineering study.

3. SCHOOL AREA, ZONE, AND CROSSING STUDY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 Florida law places the basic responsibility for school site planning and an annual review of school sites for proper traffic control and safety devices with each local school board in cooperation with the appropriate municipal, county, regional, or state agencies.

Before the start of the school year local agencies should arrange for an annual inspection by an appropriate expert in traffic control, of school zones under their jurisdiction. This person should be a representative of the city or county engineering department who fully understands Florida Department of Transportation standards for signing and pavement markings for school zones.

- 3.2 Upon the request of a school district representative or school principal, the District Traffic Operations Engineer or his/her designee shall assist the school board and local officials in the determination of adequate traffic controls for school sites, areas, zones, or crossings involving routes on the State Highway

System. Such assistance should include, where appropriate, a site-specific engineering study. Such a study should be contingent upon inclusion of the site on an approved school route.

- 3.3 When engineering studies or investigation of hazardous walking conditions indicate needed improvements on the State Highway System, the District Traffic Operations Engineer shall implement or request from the appropriate authority, the needed improvements in a timely manner.
- 3.4 As stated in **Section 316.1895(2), F.S.**, local government shall request signing for the federally funded Headstart facilities.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The design, application, and installation of traffic control devices in school areas, zones, and crossings shall comply with the **Department's Design Standards, Index 17344**. The typical application of signs, markings, and signals contained therein must comply with the **Chapter 7 of MUTCD**.

In rural areas, where approach speeds are higher, flashing beacons should be used to increase the conspicuity of school zones.

- 4.2 Notwithstanding the provisions of **Section 316.1895(7), F.S.**, portable signs designating school zones, school zone speed limits, or school crossings are specifically prohibited in accordance with the **MUTCD**.

In lieu of portable signs, school officials may use approved traffic cones or 28-inch school zone vertical panels within the roadway, during approved school hours, when the need to emphasize a school zone or school crossing exists. These devices shall be placed in both directions on the centerline at the advance school zone crossing sign when accentuation is needed. On multilane divided roadways, these devices may be placed on each lane line of the school zone or school crossing. The legend "SCHOOL" may be printed on the cone in four inch black vertical lettering.

Traffic cones used for the above purpose must be used in accordance with **Section 6F.59 of the MUTCD**.

Local school boards may continue using 28-inch orange cones until July 1, 2008. For additional information on the 28-inch school zone vertical panels, contact the State Traffic Engineering and Operations Office at (850) 410-5600.

- 4.3 School speed zones should be kept as short as practical and should not

necessarily extend along the entire highway frontage of the school property. They should only be used where students are crossing or are in close proximity to the roadway.

If schools are located such that reduced speed zones for each school appear to run together, with less than 300 feet of separation between reduced speed zones, one longer school zone may be used. This option may extend the length of time measures are effective, but will minimize motorist confusion.

- 4.4** School zones and signalized intersections are independent control techniques, and the use of one neither requires nor precludes the use of the other. Whenever possible, if a school crossing is warranted, it should be located at a signalized intersection. However, all traffic control signal installations must meet one or more of the **MUTCD's** signal warrants. A school zone should not be established simply because a signalized intersection exists near a school.

When a school crossing is located at a signalized intersection, the traffic engineer should determine if traffic movement restrictions are needed. Permissive left turns may be restricted during school zone operating hours and right-turn-on-red may have to be disallowed at some intersections. Field observations of all such crossings are recommended.

- 4.5** School zones shall be maintained by the respective government entity having responsibility per **Section 316.1895, F.S.** Maintenance and replacement of traffic control devices shall be done in a timely manner.

5. TRAINING

None required.

6. FORMS

None required.