

MEMORANDUM

TO: Certification Acceptance Agencies, Council of Governments, Metropolitan Planning Organizations and their Sub-Recipients, Project Management Group, Project Resource Office, Local Public Agency Section

FROM: Lisa Pounds, Local Public Agency Section Manager

CC: Steve Boschen, Infrastructure Delivery and Operations, Director
Tom Deitering, Federal Highway Administration
Eunice Chan, Federal Highway Administration

DATE: August 15, 2019

RE: Final Rule for 23 CFR 625.4 - Effective for all National Highway System Projects Authorized for PE on or after December 3, 2018

This memorandum serves as notice that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published the Final Rule to Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 625 in the Federal Register on November 1, 2018 (Docket No. FHWA-2017-0001 or <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2018-23821>).

The rule modifies regulations governing new construction, reconstruction, resurfacing (except for maintenance resurfacing), restoration, and rehabilitation projects on the NHS (including the Interstate system), by incorporating by reference the current versions of design standards and standard specifications previously adopted and incorporated by reference under 23 CFR 625.4, and removing the outdated or superseded versions of these standards and specifications. Use of the updated standards is required for all National Highway Systems (NHS) projects authorized to proceed with design activities on or after December 3, 2018. All projects authorized prior to this date may continue to use the previously adopted standards or update to the new standards. These design standards and standard specifications were established by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and represent the most recent refinements that professional organizations have formally accepted.

The regulation revisions include referencing current versions of:

- A Policy on Design Standards – Interstate System, AASHTO, 2016
- AASHTO LRFD Bridge Construction Specifications, 4th Edition, AASHTO, 2017
- AASHTO LRFD Bridge Design Specifications, 8th Edition, AASHTO, 2017
- AASHTO LRFD Movable Highway Bridge Design Specifications, 2nd Edition, AASHTO, 2007, including 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, and 2015 Interim Revisions
- AASHTO/AWS D1.5M/D1.5: 2015 Bridge Welding Code, 7th Edition, AASHTO, 2016, including 2018 Interim Revisions
- Standard Specifications for Transportation Materials and Methods of Sampling and Testing, and AASHTO Provisional Standards, AASHTO, 2017

- Standard Specifications for Structural Supports for Highway Signs, Luminaries, and Traffic Signals, 6th Edition, AASHTO, 2013, including 2015 Interim Revisions
- LRFD Specifications for Structural Supports for Highway Signs, Luminaries, and Traffic Signals, 1st Edition, AASHTO, 2015, with 2017 and 2018 Interim Revisions

The referenced standards in 23 CFR 625.4 establish Federal standards for work on the NHS regardless of funding source.

One clarification should be noted about the last two references in the list above. FHWA revised §625.4(b)(7) to incorporate by reference two alternative specifications applicable to the structural design of supports for highway signs, luminaires, and traffic signals.

The first alternative is the most current version of the revised AASHTO specification entitled Standard Specifications for Structural Supports for Highway Sign, Luminaires, and Traffic Signals, 6th Edition, and includes 2013 and 2015 Interim Revisions. The second alternative specification is AASHTO's LRFD Specifications for Structural Supports for Highway Signs, Luminaires, and Traffic Signals, 1st Edition, and includes 2015, 2017, and 2018 Interim Revisions. While the LRFD specification is a more comprehensive, improved specification that reflects the latest research and knowledge, FHWA has determined that design pursuant to either specification provides for safe and reliable structural supports for highways signs, luminaries, and traffic signals. In the future, the Standard Specifications will be phased out, but no timeline for this transition has been established.

State DOTs were provided an opportunity to select one of these alternative specifications to perform the design, fabrication and erection of these types of structures. ADOT chose the Standard Specifications for Structural Supports for Highway Signs, Luminaries, and Traffic Signals, 6th Edition, AASHTO, 2013, including 2015 Interim Revisions. The link below is to an ADOT design bulletin discussing this implementation.

<https://www.azdot.gov/docs/default-source/bridge/bgbulletin2019-1.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

Exceptions to standards should continue to be handled in accordance with the May 5, 2016 guidance at <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/design/standards/160505.cfm> and Stewardship and Oversight agreements in each State.

As a reference, below is an interactive map for users to view roadways on the National Highway System in Arizona.

<http://adot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=82c73b42e6f74ee8b672d751cdccfe93>

Please contact Lisa Pounds, Local Public Agency Section Manager at 602-712-8088 or lpounds@azdot.gov.