



## Florida Department of Transportation

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### ROADWAY DESIGN BULLETIN 10-10

DATE: August 9, 2010

TO: District Design Engineers, Plans Preparation Manual Holders

FROM: David C. O'Hagan, PE, State Roadway Design Engineer 

COPIES: Brian Blanchard, Robert Robertson, Tim Lattner, Roosevelt Petithomme, Duane Brautigam  
Chris Richter (FHWA)

SUBJECT: Coordination of Vertical Clearance Design Exceptions on the Interstate System

#### **Background:**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Military Traffic Management Command Transportation Engineering Agency (MTMCTEA) of the Department of Defense have cooperated to meet the demands of the military traffic on the Interstate System, particularly in the area of vertical clearance. On January 1, 2004, MTMCTEA changed its name to the Surface Deployment and Distribution Command Transportation Engineering Agency (SDDCTEA). The SDDCTEA has also relocated from Virginia to Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. The coordination and reporting with SDDCTEA on all design exceptions for vertical clearance is to ensure they are aware of the location of nonstandard clearances on the Interstate System in the event a defense emergency arises. The military continues to have a need for the 16-ft clearance.

This vertical clearance standard on the Interstate System is contained in "A Policy on Design Standards – Interstate System", AASHTO 2005. Information on Coordination of Design Exception for Vertical Clearance on the interstate can be found at: [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/design/design\\_standards.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/design/design_standards.cfm)

#### **Requirements:**

In the Plans Preparation Manual, Volume 1, Section 23.3, replace the list of issues requiring FHWA Division Administrator approval with:

Approval is required from the FHWA Division Administrator for the following:

- Design Exceptions on full FHWA oversight projects.
- Exceptions involving horizontal or vertical clearances for railroads not meeting the requirements of **Rule 14-57 F.A.C.** or the clearance criteria for the South Florida Rail Corridor (**Topic No. 000-725-003 - South Florida Rail Corridor Clearance Policy for 25 KV service**).
- All exceptions to the 16-ft vertical clearance standard on rural Interstate routes or on a single Interstate route through urban areas. The completed "Interstate Vertical Clearance Exception Coordination" form, (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/design/090415.cfm>), must be provided to the FHWA Florida Division prior to submitting the form to the Surface Deployment and Distribution Command Transportation Engineering Agency (SDDCTEA). The District will then submit the form to the SDDCTEA, and provide a copy of the approval with the design exception. A request for coordination must take place before the District Design Engineer can recommend the Design Exception. Allow for 10 working days after SDDCTEA receipt for action on the request.

**Implementation:**

These changes are effective immediately.

**Requirements:**

In the Plans Preparation Manual, Volume 1, Section 23.9, replace Table 23.9.6, AASHTO Vertical Clearance (Minimum), with:

| Type Facility       | Vertical Clearance (feet) | AASHTO                 |
|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Freeways            | 16 <sup>(1),(2),(5)</sup> | pp. 506, 507, 763, 764 |
| Arterials: Rural    | 16 <sup>(1),(2)</sup>     | pp. 447, 763, 764      |
| Urban               | 16 <sup>(1),(2)</sup>     | 472, 763, 764          |
| Other Highways      | 14 <sup>(2)</sup>         | pp. 385, 507           |
| Sign Trusses        | 17 (2)                    | pg. 507                |
| Pedestrian Overpass | 17 <sup>(2)</sup>         | pg. 507                |
| Tunnels: Freeways   | 16 <sup>(2)</sup>         | pg. 355                |
| Highways Other      | 14 <sup>(2)</sup>         | pg. 355                |
| Railroads           | 23 <sup>(2),(3),(4)</sup> | pg. 522                |

1. 14 feet allowed in highly developed urban areas if alternate route has 16 feet.
2. Minimum value that can be used without a Design Exception. An allowance of 6 inches should be added to vertical clearance to accommodate future resurfacing.
3. Over High Speed Rail Systems: See Department guidelines and specifications for Intermediate Class Rail Operations entitled *Standard Specifications for the Design and Construction of Railways*.
4. Over Electrified Railroad: The minimum vertical clearance shall be 24 feet 3 inches. This provision is based on FDOT Policy for 25 kV service: *South Florida Rail Corridor Clearance (Topic No. 000-725-003)*
5. All exceptions to the 16-ft vertical clearance standard on rural Interstate routes or on a single Interstate route through urban areas must be coordinated with Surface Deployment and Distribution Command Transportation Engineering Agency (SDDCTEA). This applies to all types of construction projects that create non-standard clearances. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will review and approve all vertical clearance design exceptions on the Interstate for both oversight and delegated projects.

**Implementation:**

These changes are effective immediately.

**Requirements:**

In the Plans Preparation Manual, Volume 1, Section 25.4.13 Vertical Clearance, add the following statement:

All exceptions to the 16-ft vertical clearance standard on rural Interstate routes or on a single Interstate route through urban areas must be coordinated with SDDCTEA. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will review and approve all vertical clearance design exceptions on the Interstate for both oversight and delegated projects. This applies to all types of construction projects that create non-standard clearances.

**Implementation:**

These changes are effective immediately.

**Contact:**

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