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**OLYMPIC REGION**

December 3, 2003

TO: Chris Christopher  
Kevin Dayton  
Harold Peterfeso

THRU: Toby Rickman 

FROM: Frank Newboles   
360-705-7392

SUBJECT: Special Warning Signs for Motorcycles

This year's legislative session created the need to provide special warning signs for motorcyclists through SSB 5457. This is an exception to our normal philosophy and practice of providing warning signs for the roadway condition, not a specific type of vehicle. RCW 47.36.200 is amended to incorporate the new requirement which becomes effective January 1, 2004.

The attached guidance is intended to assist with implementation of the new requirement which will eventually be incorporated into the revised version of the Work Zone Traffic Control Guidelines Book, M54-44.

Please distribute this guidance through your project development/construction process and the region maintenance office as appropriate. It is important that we comply with the use of the new signs not only to fulfill the legislative intent, but also to ensure that we are not exposed to any additional liability in the event of a work zone motorcycle crash.

Let me know if you have any questions.

FRN  
Attachments

cc: Traffic Engineers  
Jim Shanafelt  
Scott Zeller

## **Special Warning Signs for Motorcycles** (see attached detail)

The Washington State Legislature has determined that special warning signs must be provided (RCW 47.36.200) at work zones in addition to standard warning signs, to warn motorcyclists at work zone locations that are potentially hazardous to motorcycles. The following roadway conditions require the placement of sign, W21-1701 "MOTORCYCLES USE EXTREME CAUTION":

### Roadway Condition(s)

- Grooved pavement (generally during pavement planning removal)
- Abrupt lane edges (during paving & pavement removal)
- Steel plates (usually temporary utility work, may not affect WSDOT too often)
- Gravel or Earth (many operations on the roadway or off could leave this type of loose material on the roadway surface)

Standard warning signs must also be used to warn of the actual roadway condition. Some applicable standard warning signs may be:

- W21-801 "ABRUPT LANE EDGE"
- W8-7 "LOOSE GRAVEL"
- W8-2001 "GROOVED PAVEMENT"
- W21-2 "FRESH OIL"
- W8-8 "ROUGH ROAD"
- W8-1 "BUMP"

Sign W21-1701 should be installed at 1 mile spacing, throughout the work zone where the condition(s) exist, as part of a sequence of other appropriate standard warning signs (above examples) also, on 1 mile spacing.

Sign W21-1701 is not required for short duration\* (up to 1 hour) work zones, emergencies or incident response operations. Other operations that have no direct impact on the roadway condition, such as:

- Mowing
- Shoulder work
- Snow & ice removal
- Debris removal

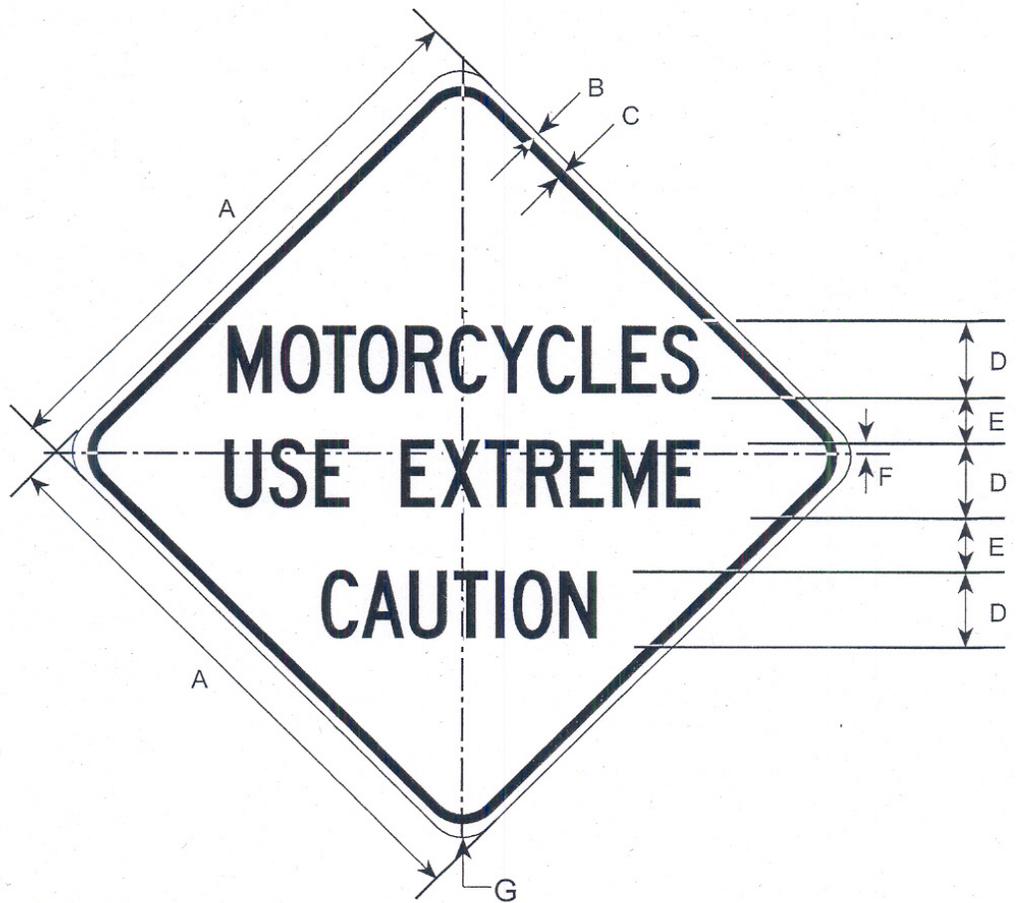
Care must be exercised during all work zone operations to not inadvertently create one or more of the above roadway conditions that may be hazardous for motorcycles.

Additional roadway cleaning may be needed to remove gravel, earth or other debris that may have been stockpiled, spilled or tracked onto the roadway surface.

\* Assumes that the short duration work zone does not leave the roadway surface in one of the four conditions listed above.

# W21-1701

5/03



DIMENSIONS (MILLIMETERS)						
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
900	16	22	125C	75	25	56
1200	19	31	150C	100	38	75

DIMENSIONS (INCHES)						
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
36	5/8	7/8	5C	3	1	2 1/4
48	3/4	1 1/4	6C	4	1 1/2	3

## COLORS

LEGEND—BLACK (NON-REFL)  
BACKGROUND—ORANGE

**WASHINGTON STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON 98504**

December 22, 2003

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:**

**SUBJECT:** Special Warning Signs for Motorcycles

**Background:** The 2003 legislative session created the need to provide special warning signs for motorcyclists through SSB 5457. This has come as an exception to our normal philosophy and practice of signing for the **condition** of the roadway, and not for specific vehicle types. The resultant amendment to RCW 47.36.200 **becomes effective January 1, 2004.**

The WSDOT has responded to the legislation by adopting the motorcycle warning sign as part of the MUTCD and state amendments (WAC 468-95-315). They have developed a black on orange sign that reads "MOTORCYCLES USE EXTREME CAUTION". The new sign has been designated as W21-1701 in the Sign Fabrication Manual. Copies of the new sign detail have been sent to fabricators, and the detail will appear in the January 2004 version of the Sign Fabrication Manual.

The WSDOT has developed guidelines for implementing the new legislation. These guidelines will be incorporated into the next revision of the Work Zone Traffic Control Guidelines Book, M54-44.

**Types of Projects Affected:** Any project where there will be grooved pavement, abrupt lane edges, steel plates, or gravel or earth surfaced roadways will be affected.

**Direction:** To be in compliance with the new legislation, the motorcycle warning signs must be incorporated, in accordance with the guidelines, while the specified road conditions exist during construction.

**Value in Making the Change:** The intent of the legislation is to provide additional awareness to motorcyclists of changed roadway conditions as they travel through construction zones. Adding these signs to the traditional signs warning of unexpected roadway conditions, will potentially reduce motorcycle accidents in work zones, and minimize liability for the WSDOT and its contractors.