

## **Secretary's Executive Order E 1060.00 Speed Limit Reductions in Work Zones Summary of Changes**

This document outlines the purpose of the new SEO and summarizes key changes, new elements and responsibilities.

### **Purpose**

Secretary's Executive Order E 1060.00 replaces Directive D 55-20 and provides updated direction to address the following key issues:

- **Credibility** – Some work zones utilize speed limit reductions that are not appropriate and do not make sense to drivers. Overuse of continuous regulatory speed limits that are not consistent with work zone conditions and speeds set too low are the most common misuse.
- **Compliance** – Poor driver speed compliance is directly related to credibility and may also adversely impact work zone safety by implying a false sense of safety. Worse yet, designing to an improper lower speed limit provides inadequate warning and is inconsistent with actual traffic speed.
- **Consistency** – A higher level of statewide consistency is desired. Currently there are region to region differences on similar work zones.
- **Emphasis** – Greater emphasis to design work zones at the existing speed limit is intended. This approach is appropriate and effective based on safety and mobility considerations and does not rely on a lower speed limit that we hope is obeyed.

Although D 55-20 is replaced, much of the rules, exceptions and authority level are retained. The requirements of RCW 47.48.020 are not changed.

### **Changes & New Elements**

The following items highlight changes and new policy elements in the SEO.

- New companion guidance in the Traffic Manual Chapter 5, Appendix 5 B is created to assist with technical aspects of designing and implementing speed limit reductions in work zones. Also, tools, techniques and strategies are included.
- Three categories of speed limit reductions are defined:
  - Continuous Regulatory Speed Limit Reduction
  - Variable Regulatory Speed Limit Reduction
  - Advisory Speed Limit Reduction

Emphasis is placed on limiting the use of Continuous Regulatory Speed Limit Reductions.

- A simple approval process is outlined in the new policy to ensure that appropriate personnel are involved in providing accurate information and decision making.

- The previous directive lacked specific criteria to assist designers and managers with adequate decision making rational. New examples, tools and strategies are referenced.
- A new Speed Limit Reduction Work Sheet is created to assist with processing speed limit reduction requests.
- The Traffic Control Plan (TCP) requirements include direction on speed zone locations and existing adjacent speed zones.
- If a speed reduction is warranted, more consideration of a Variable Regulatory Speed Limit reduction may be appropriate over a Continuous Regulatory Speed Limit reduction since there may be no need during non-working hours.

### **Authority & Approval**

- In general the existing authority level remains with the Regional Administrator or delegated to the Region Traffic Engineer. A specific new requirement for State Traffic Engineer approval is added for proposed reductions that are;
  - More than 10 MPH on any route or less than 60 MPH on freeways.
  - Unique or not consistent with the SEO requirements.
- Five specific exceptions are allowed to accommodate the following operations and conditions:
  - BST/Chip Seal Work Zones
  - Traffic Detours on Temporary Roadway Alignment
  - Temporary Traffic Signals
  - Emergencies
  - Unprotected Workers

Traffic speed is an important consideration in any work zone strategy. Much of the intent of the new SEO and TM Appendix 5 B is to adapt the work zone design to accommodate existing traffic speed as the most effective means of dealing with the related safety issues. Also there are new techniques and tools that may be more effective and appropriate than a traditional continuous regulatory speed limit reduction.

Contact your Region or HQ Traffic Office for additional assistance.