

TO: ASSISTANT CHIEF HIGHWAY ENGINEER  
ALL HQ DIRECTORS: Prof. Services, Planning and Major Projects  
ALL REGIONAL MANAGERS: Prof. Services, Planning and Operations  
ALL DISTRICT HIGHWAYS MANAGERS

SUBJECT: THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MINISTRY STANDARDS FOR THE DESIGN, LAYOUT  
AND PLACEMENT OF FREEWAY AND EXPRESSWAY DIRECTIONAL (GUIDE) SIGNS

BACKGROUND:

The Ministry of Transportation and Highways, Highway Engineering Branch has now completed a comprehensive review of international practice for the design and placement of freeway and expressway directional signs.

As a result of this review, the Ministry is now developing new standards for the design, layout, fabrication and placement of provincial freeway and expressway directional signs.

POLICY AND PRACTICE:

In general, the new signs will have standardized legend with uniform symbols and text. Sign boards will be predominantly larger than at present, contain simpler but necessary information and messages, and will be placed at consistent locations for maximum visibility to the driver, to enable better responses.

Key elements of the new practice will be:

- the application of the European style of directional sign design, layout and placement,
- the adoption of typographic standards as developed by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration,
- the exclusive use of "Highway Gothic" as the standard text font for directional signs,
- the development of an economical "modular" overhead sign support structure system.

In addition to new standards, the Ministry will develop and maintain a list of key communities, transportation nodes, and destinations which will ultimately form the basic matrix for provincial directional sign content. This aspect of the new practice will ensure that logical and consistent route information is presented to the motorist.

PROCEDURE:

As the new practice will generally be evolved through application to new highway construction projects; as well as through the redesign of existing facilities; initial design will be carried out by Highway Engineering Branch. However, as documentation on standards becomes available for distribution, preliminary work can then be undertaken at the Regional and District level with final approval for sign fabrication/installation by Headquarters.


In most cases, because of the larger message boards and precise placement criteria, guide signs will be erected on breakaway sign supports or mounted on overhead structures. For these reasons, cost estimates and project schedules will have to reflect the higher costs and additional time required to install these types of special structures.

The new practice will be applied initially to the design of all new freeway and expressway classified Major Projects. We have also begun the systematic updating of the existing freeways in the Lower Mainland.

This program will later be expanded Province-wide to cover all major conventional highways.

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