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No. NHIII/P/13/79

*Dated the 4th August, 1981*

To

The Engineer-in-Chief/Chief Engineers/Addl. Chief Engineers of State PWDs & U.Ts. dealing with National Highways/D.G. of Works, CPWD.

Sub: Flood damages to National Highways—Instructions regarding mitigation, reporting and remedial measures

The need for keeping the National Highways, which form the life lines of road transport in the country, open to traffic at all times needs no special emphasis. Because of unprecedented rains and floods, however, certain road sections may get over-topped breached or severely damaged, but adverse effects of this kind can be mitigated to a great extent by timely action based on inspection and close monitoring of the road condition.

2. Whenever, any road section becomes so damaged or over-topped or breached as to necessitate suspension of traffic, the immediate requirement would be to arrange for diversion of traffic through alternate routes, and take up immediate repairs for restoration of traffic in accordance with the para 3 (3) of National Highway Rules 1957, with a report sent to the Ministry and the concerned Audit Officer, indicating the approximate

amount of the likely liability. After immediate restoration, permanent remedial measures should be devised so that the affected sections are not subject to such damages in the future years.

3. The Ministry had issued detailed instructions to all State PWDs on the above aspects from time to time besides bringing forth the subject for discussion at the Chief Engineers' meetings. Because of the importance of the problem, some of the salient points made in these are brought out once again to the notice of State Chief Engineers so that none of these is lost sight of:

(a) Advance action prior to rains

While the PWDs should be geared up to meet any exigency caused by floods, the aspects which need special attention are:

- (i) cleaning of all roadside/catch water drains of debris and remedial of any blockade in the waterway of cross-drainage structures so that the flood waters flow freely without any heading up;
- (ii) protection of abutments and piers of cross-drainage structures, embankment slopes etc. prone to erosion. (Circulars No. PL-67 (29)/76-NHVI dated 28.6.79 and No. NHIII/P/13/79 dated 7.8.80).

(b) Action during the rainy season

A close watch should be kept on the flood levels and the road should be maintained in traffic-worthy condition. (Circular No. PL-67 (29)/76-NHVI dated 28.6.79).

(c) Where a road section gets heavily damaged or breached necessitating suspension of traffic.

- (i) Immediate arrangement should be made for diverting the traffic through alternate routes. (Circular No. NHIII-33 (126)/72 dated 20.3.73).
- (ii) Concurrently, the Ministry must be informed of the traffic dislocation by wire or telephone. (Circulars No. WL/43(12)/63 dated 21.9.63 and No. NHIII/P/13/79 dated 8.8.79).

The general experience, however, has been that the telegraphic message, many a time are unusually delayed, and in some cases are not received at all with the result that the Ministry remains in dark about the emergency situation on the National Highways. In future, therefore, it is requested that whenever any traffic dislocation is anticipated for a period of 24 hours or more, the concerned EE/AEE should ensure that the concerned officer in this Ministry is informed of the situation on telephone. In case the telephone services are also dislocated the field officers may obtain the help of District Authorities for use of wireless facility for establishing contact with the Chief Engineer at State Headquarters who in turn should immediately inform this Ministry over telephone. In some cases, particularly for major dislocations on important National Highways, when all other possible communication channels have failed, the services of a special messenger might be utilised for intimating the position to this Ministry.

(iii) The measures at (ii) above should be followed by detailed reports showing particulars of the damage and the causes thereof of the period over which the affected reaches are likely to be closed to traffic, the restoration measures being undertaken and the approximate amount of likely liability.

(Circular No. WL/43/12/63/ dated 21.9.63 and No. NHIII/P/13/79 dated 7.8.79).

(d) Permanent remedial measures

These should be designed and proposals thereof formulated to ensure that the damages that had happened do not recur in the future. The proposal should be framed after an in-depth study and causes of the damages, the drainage requirements of the area and its possible changes due to construction of river valley/irrigation projects etc. While formulating the proposals, all concerned authorities such as Irrigation Department, Flood Control Authority, Irrigation/Power Project Authority, Agriculture Department etc. should be consulted as may be necessary and desirable, and a coordinated plan of action for the area and road communication in it, developed as far as possible. Coordination with individual authority for specific problems could also help, e.g., effect of water logging could be reduced if the concerned authority is prevailed upon to provide a network of tubewells for irrigation or water supply in the area.

(Circular No. NHIII/P/13/79 dated 8.8.79).

4. It is requested that contents of this circular may be brought to the notice of all officers in your Department dealing with National Highways for strict compliance. A record of floods National Highways Stretches affected nature of damages and details of breaches may be kept.

5. Action taken in the matter may please be intimated to this Department.