

No. PL-80 (2)/71-SP

Dated the 27th July, 1971

To

1. The Chief Engineers of all State PWDs (dealing with National Highways)
2. The Engineer-in-Chief, CPWD, Nirman Bhavan, Maulana Azad Road, New Delhi
3. The Principal Engineer, Manipur, Imphal
4. The Chief Engineer (Delhi Admn.)

Sub : Increased Safety on National Highways through Provision of Road Markings and Road Signs

The incidence of accidents on highways in India is amongst the highest in the world. This calls for all possible efforts to relieve the position. Among the measures recognised as having the potential to cause an impact on reduction of highway accident rate, a few important and relevant ones discussed here are: the provision of appropriate road markings and road signs along the highways. Road markings increase safety by making it easier for the drivers to discern the run of the road and to position themselves correctly thereon. Markings are particularly valuable during the hours of darkness when the possibility of accidents to occur is the most. Similarly, cautionary road signs, by forewarning the drivers about approaching hazards, enhance safety of travel. Mandatory and informatory signs perform the same function in their own right.

2. Accordingly, it is considered imperative that in the interest of road safety, a concerted drive should be launched on the National Highways for providing road markings and road signs at all important locations as necessary. Road markings on the National Highways should conform to IRC: 35-1970 "Code of Practice for Road Markings (With Paints)". In the first instance, emphasis should be on providing the following types of road markings along the entire National Highway system :—

- (i) No-passing zone markings;
- (ii) Carriageway width transition markings;
- (iii) Markings at approaches to intersections;
- (iv) Obstruction approach markings;
- (v) Markings on objects within the carriageway; and
- (vi) Markings on objects adjacent to the carriageway :

Among these markings also it might be more rewarding to make a start with markings at the approaches to intersections, in the nature of acceleration and deceleration lanes, traffic lane lines and stop lines, which would be effective in guiding the traffic into the required paths of travel, thereby ensuring greater safety at these vulnerable points which between them claim about a quarter of all accidents on the rural highway network.

3. For the guidance of motorists it is also essential that cautionary road signs such as, "zig zag", "level crossing", "dead end", "narrow bridge" etc., as necessary, should be put up all along the National Highways. It is the experience that these signs are presently non-existent even at many of the confirmed accident-prone spots. Cautionary signs, as regards their shape, colour scheme and location, should be strictly in accordance with the publication "Traffic Signs" brought out by the Indian Roads Congress.

4. The role of mandatory and informatory signs is no less important in this context. These signs should be set up at all important locations in conformity with the publication "Traffic Signs" cited in the preceding paragraph. Among informatory signs, special attention deserves to be paid to the provision of road junction approach signs about which detailed instructions had been conveyed by the Ministry *vide* its letter No. SP-77 (7)/59 dated the 7th January, 1960, and which have been reiterated at several occasions since.

5. It would be desirable, for an effective pursuit of these requirements, to list up all the deficiencies requiring to be made up location-wise and then to speedily plan and arrange for their removal.

6. It is important that once the road markings and cautionary signs are established these should be kept well-maintained and renewed periodically as required. This could easily be ensured by instituting a system of regular checks, perhaps at quarterly intervals. Obliterated markings and signs not only spoil the appearance of the highway but also could misinform the drivers about the message intended to be conveyed. The expenditure incurred in connection with the provision of markings and signs is chargeable to the Maintenance and Repairs Grants for the National Highways; therefore there should be no difficulty on that account.

7. We will appreciate an early reply from you intimating the steps being taken for implementing the desired programme.