

Background on amendments to the Design Standards for Highways regulation at 23 CFR 625:

FHWA amends its regulations governing design standards and standard specifications applicable to new construction, reconstruction, resurfacing (except for maintenance resurfacing), restoration, and rehabilitation projects on the NHS. In issuing this final rule, FHWA will allow State departments of transportation to adopt procedures or design criteria, as approved by FHWA, that enable the State to undertake resurfacing, restoration, and rehabilitation (RRR) projects on freeways, including Interstate highways, without utilizing design exceptions as long as the RRR procedures or criteria are met. The Office of Infrastructure is reviewing Technical Advisory T5040.28, *Developing Geometric Design Criteria and Processes for Nonfreeway RRR Projects*, to consider possible updates to reflect the current state of the practice and to provide considerations for RRR criteria to be used on freeways.

In addition, FHWA incorporates by reference updated versions of design standards and standard specifications previously adopted and incorporated by reference and removes from its regulations the corresponding outdated or superseded versions of these standards and specifications. The final rule also implements provisions of the 2015 Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act.

The regulation incorporates by reference the:

- AASHTO *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*, 2018
- AASHTO *LRFD Movable Highway Bridge Design Specifications*, 2nd Edition, 2007, including 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2018 Interim Revisions
- AASHTO *Standard Specifications for Structural Supports for Highway Signs, Luminaires, and Traffic Signals*, 6th Edition, 2013 with 2015, 2019, and 2020 Interim Revisions
- AASHTO *LRFD Specifications for Structural Supports for Highway Signs, Luminaires, and Traffic Signals*, 1st Edition, 2015, with 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 Interim Revisions
- AWS D1.1/D1.1M:2015 *Structural Welding Code – Steel*, 2nd printing, 2016

The regulation deletes the incorporation by reference of the:

- 2018 Interim Revisions to AASHTO/AWS D1.5M/D1.5 *Bridge Welding Code*
- AASHTO *Standard Specifications for Transportation Materials and Methods of Sampling and Testing*

Paragraph 625.3(f)(2), provides the framework for a programmatic exception for the limited purpose of allowing States to use a more recent edition of a standard or specification incorporated by reference in § 625.4(d). Headquarters approval is required for these programmatic exceptions.

Project exceptions to standards should continue to be handled in accordance with the May 5, 2016 guidance at <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/design/standards/160505.cfm> and Stewardship and Oversight agreements in each State.