

Design Standards Letter

Letter Number: D-1960-00

Letter Date: 01/27/1960

Effective Date: 01/27/1960

Section/Plan No.: None

Subject: Vertical Clearance on the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways

Body

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS

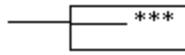
Washington, D.C.

INSTRUCTION MEMORANDUM 20-2-60

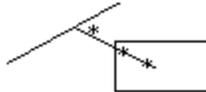
The Secretary of Commerce has approved a revision in the minimum vertical clearance of overhead structures on the Interstate System to a minimum value of 16 feet, which value supersedes the minimum value of 14 feet as contained in the Geometric Design Standards for the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, approved July 17, 1956. The Secretary's action is in accordance with requests made by the Department of Defense and with AASHO recommendations incident thereto.

The revised 16-foot vertical clearance applies to all portions of the Interstate System classified as rural. At urban places application of the 16-foot clearance shall be limited to a single routing where the revised vertical clearance can be developed most economically, even though that single routing is indirect. Examples of routes or sections of routes to which the revised 16-foot clearance would not apply are shown below. These are illustrative examples only. Any other routing or combination which will provide continuity of routing may also be used if it is more economical than the type illustrated here.

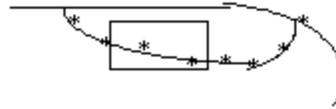
Terminal Cities



Spur Routes



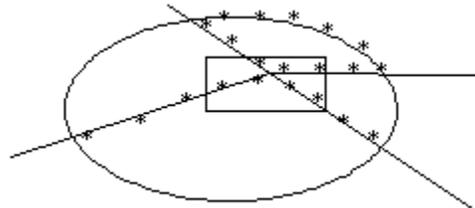
Loop Routes



Branching Approach Routes



Segment of Belt Route



Where more than one Interstate System route has been designated at urban places of less than 500,000 population, including urbanized areas in the United States as classified by the Bureau of the Census in 1950, the single routing selected for 16-foot clearance shall be approved by the regional engineer, while at urban places exceeding this figure, such selections shall be referred to the Washington office for approval and such coordination with the Department of Defense as may be necessary. Two copies of the approval papers with data justifying selection and sketch may showing the location should be furnished the Washington office in all cases.

Effective with issuance of this memorandum, all designs shall provide minimum net vertical clearance of 16 feet over the entire roadway width including the usable width of shoulders, plus such additional amount as normally used by the State to accommodate future resurfacing, packed snow, or similar allowances which are an approved regular element of State standard design. Vertical clearances in excess of this revised design standard shall not be approved, except where natural topography affords savings in cost of construction through adoption of grade liens providing greater clearance, without securing prior approval of the Washington office on an individual project basis.

Projects now under design should be revised to conform to this instruction, unless they can be excluded by virtue of the routing arrangement described in the second paragraph of this memorandum, or will result in excessive cost or delay. Projects already under construction should likewise be modified to this revised standard, provided this can be done without

excessive increase in cost or delay to the project, and the revision can be accomplished without the necessity for negotiating a supplemental agreement with the contractor for new unit prices or items of work.

No decision has been reached with respect to the treatment of structures already built which provide clearances of less than 16 feet.