

Design Standards Letter

Letter Number: **D-1960-32**

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Section/Plan No.: **None**

Subject: **Policy on Access Between Adjacent Railroads and Interstate Highways**

Body

TO ALL DIVISION, DISTRICT AND URBAN ENGINEERS:

In order to establish the conditions under which there can be access between Interstate Highways and adjacent railroads, the following Statement of Policy was prepared by the AASHO and adopted on August 25, 1960. It has as its primary purposes the maintenance of access control, increasing highway safety and utility to the maximum, and insuring uniformity of such access among the States. It recognized the public interest to make limited provision for access between adjacent Interstate highways and existing railroads. The policy was developed for uniform application to routes of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, but has value as a guide for all controlled access highways.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Purpose:

In view of the infrequent necessity for rubber-tired railroad vehicles and vehicles servicing utilities located on railroad rights-of-way to travel between adjacent Interstate highways and existing railroad, it is deemed to be in the overall public interest to make limited and controlled provision for such travel where it is not feasible for such vehicles otherwise to have access to the railroad right-of-way from other public highways. This Statement of Policy applies to freeways both on new location and on locations of existing highways. Adjacent freeways and railroads are those having a common right-of-way border with no other property between them. All reference to railroads in this Statement of Policy relates to existing operating railroad rights-of-way only and to utilities located thereon and not to railroad property, contiguous or otherwise, which is not directly used for railroad operations.

Conditions:

the conditions under which direct access between adjacent freeways and existing

railroads may or may not be permitted follow:

- 1. Where there are local roads crossing or adjacent to the railroad, no direct access between freeway and railroad is to be permitted. In such cases, vehicles for inspection and maintenance have access to the railroad right-of-way via said local roads, crossing track where necessary.**
- 2. Where there is a grad separation between a local road and a railroad, and it is feasible for the railroad to provide a trail-type road between the cross-road and the railroad right-of-way, no direct access between freeway and railroad is to be permitted.**
- 3. Where there are infrequent local roads or few highway-railroad crossings form which trail-type access roads are feasible, direct accesses between freeway and railroad may be permitted to result in a spacing of approximately four miles.**
- 4. Where a freeway is paralleled by a frontage road adjacent to the railroad, no direct access between the through-traffic roadways and the railroad, is to be permitted. Direct access between frontage road and railroad is to be permitted in the same manner as along any other non-controlled access road. Access between the through-traffic roadways and frontage roads shall be only by way of the ramps or other roadways provided for the general public.**
- 5. There may be extreme cases or unique topographic or other situations where direct access between an Interstate highway and a railroad, in addition to those provided for herein, may be justified. In such case, a direct access may be permitted if there is a showing that any other means of access to the railroad right-of-way is extremely difficult or costly and that the installation of the direct access will not adversely affect the design, construction, stability, traffic safety or operation of the Interstate highways.**
- 6. Where direct access is to be provided between freeway and railroad as heretofore permitted, it shall be by right turns only to and from the roadway nearest the railroad. No crossing of the median is to be permitted.**
- 7. Direct access where permitted normally shall be through a locked gate under arrangements satisfactory to the highway department.**
- 8. Parking of railroad personnel vehicles or railroad equipment shall not be permitted within the control of access lines of the Interstate highway.**
- 9. Direct access roadways provided in accordance with this policy are to be closed if a railroad ceases operation.**
- 10. Advance arrangements should be made between the railroad and highway agency for emergency maintenance procedures and for protection of highway traffic for periods of intensive railroad maintenance.**

It is important to note that this policy applies to adjacent freeways and railroads having a common right-of-way border with no other property between them. We also call special attention to paragraph 5 of the Conditions, which states that a direct access may be permitted if there is a showing that any other means of access to the railroad right-of-way is extremely difficult or costly, and that the installation of the direct access will not adversely affect the design, construction, stability, traffic safety, traffic safety or operation of the Interstate highway.

The Bureau of Public Roads has accepted this Policy as a design standard for Interstate projects and in a memorandum to its Regional and Division Engineers states as follows regarding paragraph 5 of the Conditions.

"It is anticipated that such extreme cases will be rarely encountered and that approval thereof will be given only when the conditions are extraordinary."

Requests for Bureau approval of such extreme cases must present the facts pertinent to each case and any requests made subsequent to P.S.& E. approval are referred to the Washington Office of the Bureau for approval.

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