

Design Standards Letter

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Section/Plan No.: None

Subject: Access to U.S. Geological Survey Gauging Stations along Interstate Highways

Body

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS
Washington, D. C.

Circular Memorandum To: Regional and Division Engineers:

From: G. M. Williams, Assistant Commissioner 22-10

We have received an inquiry relative to the conduct of stream gauging operations by the U. S. Geological Survey from through traffic lanes and structures on Interstate highways. The necessity for operation of these stations is recognized, yet appreciable expenditures for providing access to them is not justified since they are not operated frequently. In accordance with the full control of access feature of Interstate highways and in the interest of maintaining Interstate traffic safety, it is necessary to minimize the adverse effects of such operations. It is, therefore, desirable that the USGS coordinate its operation of stream gauging stations located or to be located on or adjacent to an Interstate highway with the appropriate State highway department.

Where access through locked gates is permitted, advance arrangements should be made by USGS personnel with State highway department representatives for the USGS to provide a trail type road through the gate to the gauging station. Where the gauging personnel is to walk to the station, advance arrangements should be made for the parking of official vehicles off the through traffic lanes and preferably beyond the shoulder.

For future stream gauging stations affecting Interstate rights-of-way, it is desirable for Public Roads division engineers to insure that the USGS is coordinating its planning with the State highway departments. In each case, a review of the proposed station should be made with the State and the USGS with an intent to so locate it as to proclude the necessity for access from the Interstate right-of-way. However, in an exceptional case where no other location is feasible, permission for access from the Interstate right-of-way may be granted,

but only through a locked gate with keys in the custody of a responsible USGS representative.

Existing stream gauging stations accessible only from Interstate through traffic lanes should be examined by each State with the USGS to determine whether it is feasible to relocate them so that direct access from the Interstate highway is not necessary. Where such relocation is not feasible, access may be retained, but only through a locked gate.

Copies of this memorandum should be distributed to the State highway departments. Appropriate distribution has been made through USGS Washington office to USGS offices