



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

May 26, 2017

An open letter to all in the highway safety hardware and roadside design community:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is improving its process for issuing Federal-aid eligibility letters for roadside safety hardware systems. The FHWA's Federal-aid eligibility letters are provided *as a service* to the States and are not a requirement for roadside safety hardware to be eligible for Federal-aid reimbursement. This change focuses the FHWA on analyzing the materials submitted for review, rather than addressing the types of crash tests that should be submitted, as the latter are determined by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) *Manual for Assessing Roadside Safety Hardware* (MASH).

This letter serves to notify you that FHWA is implementing immediate process changes as described in this letter.

Effective immediately, FHWA is implementing the following changes on how requests for Federal-aid eligibility letters for roadside safety hardware systems are accepted:

1. Moving forward, in order for manufacturers and States to qualify for a FHWA Federal-aid eligibility letter, all roadside hardware devices *must complete the full suite of recommended tests* as described in AASHTO MASH. This applies to:
  - a. all devices currently in the FHWA queue that have not received an eligibility letter by the effective date of this letter and,
  - b. retroactively to requests received after January 1, 2016.

Manufacturers and States that received an eligibility letter under AASHTO's MASH standards and did not run the full suite of tests will be required to run the remaining tests in order to retain the Federal-aid eligibility letter. The FHWA has contacted the affected manufacturers. These affected parties have up to one year, from the date of this letter, to run the balance of crash tests and re-submit their request for an eligibility letter. A written request, including crash test results from an accredited laboratory, must be submitted to FHWA within one year.

The retroactive date of January 1, 2016, corresponds to the official implementation date balloted by AASHTO and the date FHWA began issuing Federal-aid eligibility letters using standards from AASHTO's MASH only, i.e., when FHWA ceased issuing eligibility letters using National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 350 guidance.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in helping FHWA to implement these improvements to enhance the safety of roadside hardware. We will notify you of any future improvements to the eligibility letter process. For more information, please visit our website at [https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/roadway\\_dept/countermeasures/reduce\\_crash\\_severity/elig\\_process.cfm](https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/roadway_dept/countermeasures/reduce_crash_severity/elig_process.cfm).

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Brian Fouch at (202) 366-0744.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'E Alicandri', written in a cursive style.

Elizabeth Alicandri  
Associate Administrator for Safety