



Traffic Guidelines Manual

ORIGINATOR Director, Bureau of Traffic Operations		1-11-1
CHAPTER 1	General	
SECTION 11	Authorization	
SUBJECT 1	Highway Route Numbering	

INTRODUCTION

Historically the Secretary's Office has designated the State Traffic Engineer to approve assignments of highway numbers on the State Trunk Highway system with input from the Regions and locals. This does not include approval of the beginning and end and alignment of the highway, but merely the approval of the number itself. In some cases the State Traffic Engineer *may* be asked to select a number, or a rearrangement of numbers. Since the State Traffic Engineer's authority transcends region lines, all proposals for additions, deletions, or revisions to the state's route marking system **shall** be submitted to the State Traffic Engineer in the Bureau of Traffic Operations.

To allow sufficient lead time to establish or modify route numbering for new or reconstructed highways, the evaluation for the route assignment *should* begin during the highway planning stage. The State Traffic Engineer will inform and coordinate with the Division of Transportation Investment Management Bureau of Planning and other Divisions to determine appropriate highway route numbering. Any impacts to the National Highway System (NHS) if reconstructed **shall** be addressed with FHWA at the beginning of the numbering process to address NHS continuity.

NHS is a federal designation for funding eligibility, by changing the number on an NHS route the NHS designation is not changed. This would be an issue if, for example, a new bypass is built and now the NHS designation moves to the bypass. It does not move just because a bypass is given the state route number. Refer to FDM 4-1-20, Federal Aid System, for more information on the National Highway System route designation.

The official information on numbering, beginnings and terminations, as well as connecting highway limits is contained in the booklet, Official State Trunk Highway System Maps, which can be found on the WisDOT website.

STATE NUMBERED HIGHWAY NUMBERING PROCESS

Proposal to change a state highway designation is initiated by the Region, typically the Planning Section. This could constitute adding a STH route, dropping a portion of a STH route or changing the route name. It is unnecessary to submit an application for changes of a state highway to AASHTO. The following steps *should* be considered when changing a State Trunk Highway Number (this process can also be used to determine US Highway route numbering for submittal to AASHTO):

1. Proposed changes to the State Highway numbering system *should* be discussed with local government agencies representing the communities through which the proposed route change traverses prior to implementation. Others affected *should* also have their comments considered, such as trucking and farm implement operators. The Regional Traffic Engineer *should* canvass local government jurisdictions to determine their reaction, views and comments to the proposed numbering changes. However, this is strictly a courtesy procedure and final authority for making the ultimate decision still remains with the Department (i.e., local government does not have veto power over route establishment on the State Highway System). For most significant changes to the SHS, there *should* be public involvement in the decision process. This includes any implications due to mile marker and exit number changes. Often a public informational meeting or hearing at which the proposed changes are discussed and the public is allowed to comment on them is valuable.
 - a. It is necessary, however, to have approval by the county board of each county in which part of the proposed change is situated when the change is more than 2 ½ miles of the system, according to Wisconsin State Statute 84.02 (3).
2. Any impacts to the National Highway System (NHS) if reconstructed **shall** be addressed with FHWA at this time to address NHS continuity.
3. If a new STH route is being proposed, the Region *should* propose a number to discuss with BTO Traffic. Some guidelines to consider when requesting a new number:
 - a. Number cannot be used elsewhere on the STH (includes STH and USH) system unless it is an extension of an existing route.
 - b. Typically, the route number chosen is the next consecutive highway number unless the number is already used or a sufficient “tied” number can be used.
 - c. “Tied” numbers *should* be considered to relate to the main route (ex. Highway 251 connects back to Highway 51).
 - i. Tied “300” series routes *should* be used if the route connects to a state route on **one** end (spur route). Additional routes *should* use the next odd numbered series (ex. 500, 700, etc.)
 - ii. Tied “200” series *should* be used if the route connects back to the STH on **both** ends of the same route making a loop. Additional routes *should* use the next even numbered series (ex. 400, 600, etc.)
4. The State Traffic Engineer *should* seek consensus with the Region on the route number that makes the most sense, based on the reasoning above.

5. The Region prepares a formal letter explaining the reason why the route change is needed, the benefits of a route change and the timetable when it will take effect.
6. The Region submits a formal letter along with map locations to the State Traffic Engineer for approval.
7. Upon the State Traffic Engineer's approval, notification is made by Central Office Traffic to the following units:
 - a. Central Office DTIM Bureau of State Highway Programs Highway Data Management Section.
 - b. Central Office DTSD Surveying and Mapping Section. In addition to updating the State Highway Map, the Surveying and Mapping Section will also notify private sector mapping and atlas companies like MapQuest, DeLorme, etc.
 - c. Central Office DTSD Highway Development for updating the official state trunk highway list.
 - d. Regional Office(s) affected by the route numbering change.
8. The Region **shall** make the public aware of the changes and the time period for the changes. This includes:
 - a. Fire, EMS, State Patrol and Local Police.
 - b. Businesses along the route (individual mailings)
 - c. Media (TV, radio, newspapers)
 - d. Chamber of Commerce
 - e. Elected Officials and government officials
9. Once a number is established, the State Traffic Engineer will also coordinate with the Office of General Counsel in order for them to make the appropriate changes on official truck operator routing lists and maps (i.e., Trans 276).
10. Utilize PCMS as the changes take place for at least the first month.
11. Installation of independent Type II reassurance marker signs that state "Formerly" on the cardinal header. It has been WisDOT practice to keep these signs installed for two years, then removed.

If needed, the Department *may* request a legal opinion and/or interpretation from Office of General Counsel on legal matters concerning the proposed State Highway Numbering System revision.

US NUMBERED HIGHWAY NUMBERING PROCESS

Any proposed alteration of the US Numbered System *should* be extremely meritorious and thoroughly, though concisely, explained in order that the Special Committee on US Route Numbering and the Standing Committee on Highways of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) *may* give prompt and proper consideration to each and every request made by a member department. The application for US Route Number, Interstate and Bicycle Routes can be found at www.aashto.org. Refer to TGM 1-11-5, U.S. Route Renumbering Process for further instructions regarding the application process and responsible parties.

Bureau of Traffic Operations, Bureau of Planning and the Regional office(s) affected **shall** be involved in the route numbering process prior to being submitted to AASHTO.

According to the AASHTO Transportation Policy Book, January 2000, Establishment and Development of United States Numbered Highways:

1. *The Standing Committee on Highways of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials **shall** have full authority to review the U.S. numbered road system and the numbering and marking thereof, to make additions, changes, extensions, revisions or reductions in said road system and to revise the numbering or marking thereof.*
2. *Before approving any addition, change, extension, revision or reduction in the U.S. numbered road system or the numbering or marking of any U.S. numbered road, the Standing Committee on Highways **shall** consult the State Highway Department of the State or States through or within which such addition, change, extension, revision or reduction is located.*

INTERSTATE HIGHWAY NUMBERING PROCESS

Any proposed route alteration or additional route of an Interstate Highway requires the Department to work closely with FHWA to determine an appropriate route number and submission of the US Route Number, Interstate and Bicycle Routes application to the AASHTO Special Committee on US Route Numbering. The State Numbered Highway Numbering Process can be followed for the preliminary steps of the Interstate Highway Numbering Process. However, the Department **shall** coordinate with FHWA at the beginning of the process. Refer to "Federal-Aid Policy Guide Subchapter E, Part 470" for information on the policy for the signing and numbering of future Interstate corridors. The State Traffic Engineer **shall** coordinate with the Division Administrator and the Secretary's Office when proposing Interstate Highway numbers.

BUSINESS ROUTE MARKING

For information on business route markers, refer to TGM 2-4-19.1.

If a business route is proposed related to a U.S. Highway designation the route has to have the approval of AASHTO. Refer to the US Numbered Highway Numbering process stated previously.