



FDM 18-1-1 Purpose and Scope of Chapter

December 11, 2014

1.1 Originator

The Chief of Acquisition & Services Section, Bureau of Technical Services is the originator of this chapter. All questions and comments on the contents of this chapter should be directed to Michael Baumann, Statewide Utility Engineer, at (608) 267-4461.

1.2 Purpose and Scope

Utility companies have traditionally constructed their facilities on or adjacent to state highway, local road, and municipal street corridors to serve customers that are also served by the road network. Because of this traditional sharing of these transportation corridors there is always the potential for conflicts.

The objective of good utility coordination in highway design is the continued shared use of the highway corridor which permits the construction, maintenance and safe operation of the highway with minimal impact on utility facilities.

It is not always possible to design around all existing utility facilities. To reduce or eliminate utility conflicts, it may be necessary to modify the highway design, relocate them off highway right-of-way or rearrange the utilities within existing or new highway right-of-way to be compatible with the new construction. The cost of relocating these facilities may be financed entirely by the utility company, entirely by the highway agency, or shared between them.

To accomplish this relocation and resolve conflicts requires continuing liaison, coordination, and cooperation between the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (and its consultants), local highway agencies (and their consultants), and utility company representatives.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidelines for conducting this coordination process and to briefly outline the procedures to be followed when negotiating compensable reimbursement agreements with utility companies.

This chapter has been developed primarily for the use of region project development staff responsible for highway improvement projects and for designated utility coordination staff in each region and in the central office.

Consulting engineers who are under contract with WisDOT or with local highway agencies to prepare plans for highway improvement projects should also be familiar with the provisions of this chapter.

County highway commissioners and municipal officials should also be familiar with the provisions of this chapter. They should ensure that all utility coordination steps have been completed at the time of PS&E submittal to WisDOT.

A separate document, the WisDOT Guide to Utility Coordination (<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/eng-consultants/cnslt-rsrcs/util/default.aspx>) contains additional guidance on utility coordination for highway improvement projects. Unless otherwise directed, all utility coordination on state or federally funded improvement projects shall be in accordance with this chapter and the WisDOT Guide to Utility Coordination.

Utility coordination is part of the overall communication plan for a project. Refer to [FDM 2-20-5.8](#) - Communication Management (and other references in FDM 2-20) for a discussion of communication from a project management perspective.

FDM 18-1-5 Importance of Continuing Liaison

December 30, 2004

Liaison with utility companies must be a continuing process, both on a program and a project basis. Regular communication and interaction with utility company representatives allows the early identification and resolution of potential utility conflicts on improvement projects.

On a program basis, developing and updating the Six Year Highway Improvement Program provides utility representatives with information they can use for long range planning, budgeting, and scheduling of their system improvements depending on when a highway improvement is scheduled.

On a project basis, utility coordination should be a major consideration, from the time project development

begins until construction is completed. By recognizing that conflicts with utility facilities are an important design issue (like drainage, traffic, pavement structure, and construction methods), they can be properly considered in plan development. The importance of good utility coordination is recognized in various laws of the state. See [FDM 18-15-1](#), ss. 84.063 and 182.0175, Wis. Stats. place specific responsibilities on designers and contractors relating to planning and carrying out work around utility facilities.

Early contact with utility companies to exchange information will help the designer to better consider the impact of utilities on the design and vice versa. Regular communication with utility representatives as the project is being developed will keep the utility company aware of project plans and will help the designer understand the utility company's concerns.

FDM 18-1-10 Summary of Utility Relationships

December 30, 2004

The diverse and conflicting operations and uses of transportation corridors by highway and utility interests can be a source of conflict between the highway agency and the utility owner. The relationship is put to the test each time the highway agency determines that a segment of highway is to be improved and utility facilities must be altered or relocated.

Utility companies usually have the choice of using the public right-of-way or building on private property. Wisconsin Statutes (ss. 84.08, 86.07(2), 86.16, and 182.017) permit utilities to use the public right-of-way as long as their facilities do not interfere with the construction, maintenance, and safe operation of the highway, road, or street. Much of the time they elect to use the public right-of-way because no easement is required; and, they have ready access to their facilities via all-weather roads which they do not have the responsibility to maintain. However, since utilities within the existing highway right-of-way are there by permit, when the highway improvement requires the relocation of the utilities, the cost of relocation must usually be borne by the utility. Utility companies are fully aware of this when they elect to use the highway right-of-way and generally accept it as part of the cost of doing business.

In some situations however, utility companies choose to build on private easement just outside of and paralleling the highway right-of-way. If the type of facility being installed requires only minimal maintenance without the need for regular access by large vehicles, some of the advantages of accessing it directly from the adjacent public roadway may be less important to them than the security of their facility from highway related operations. The cost of any future relocation of any part of their facility on private property resulting from a highway improvement project on the adjacent highway, must usually be borne by the highway agency.

In either situation, the cost of relocating the utility facility is ultimately borne by the citizens and businesses of the state, whether as ratepayers or as highway users. Therefore, both the highway agency and the utility company should strive to maintain a good working relationship with the other. The objective is a shared use of the transportation corridor that will permit the construction, maintenance and continued safe operation of the transportation facilities with minimal impact on utility facilities

FDM 18-1-15 Trans 220 Project

February 28, 2007

Trans 220 is an administrative rule the department was required to promulgate under s. 84.063 "Utility Facilities Relocation", Wisconsin Statutes, Laws of 1991. The rule applies only to improvement projects on highways designated as part of the state trunk highway system, exclusive of connecting highways. Since administrative rules have the force of law, TRANS 220 sets forth certain legal requirements for the facilities development process.

The provisions of TRANS 220 are incorporated into [FDM 18-10 Attachment 1.1](#). Region Utility Coordinators and designers involved in utility coordination should also become familiar with the rule itself as shown here: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code/trans/trans220.pdf>. Form [DT1079](#) may be used to track key steps of the rule through approval of a utility company work plan.

Trans 220 files are to be retained three (3) years after the utility project or the companion highway construction project is closed.