

ENGINEERING DIRECTIVE

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PROJECTS EXEMPT FROM CONTROLLING CRITERIA**General**

MassHighway recognizes 13 controlling criteria from AASHTO policy which, if not met, require formal approval of design exceptions. The controlling criteria are listed in Chapter 8 of the Massachusetts Highway Design Manual. Projects may be exempt from controlling criteria if they are so limited in scope that application of the normal design standards of the Massachusetts Highway Design Manual, the AASHTO Green book and other AASHTO publications is unreasonable. There are 4 basic categories of exempt projects.

1. Surface Maintenance and Non-Roadway Improvements

The following types of projects are exempt from controlling criteria and do not require formal approval of design exceptions. The Project File, maintained by the MassHighway Project Manager, must contain an explicit statement that all work is within this category.

- Projects limited to drainage improvements.
- Crack sealing and joint repair and joint sealing.
- Micro-surfacing, chip seals, fog seals, and similar surface treatments.
- Bridge maintenance, bridge repair, or bridge rehabilitation involving less than a new superstructure.
- Other maintenance projects where all activity takes place away from, or does not affect the road surface. (Catch basin and pipe cleaning, street sweeping, grass mowing, etc.)

2. Maintenance Resurfacing

The following types of projects are exempt from controlling criteria and do not require formal approval of design exceptions, provided that an accident analysis of the project does not indicate any significant accident history attributed to substandard design elements. The accident analysis must be retained in the Project File, and the Project File must contain an explicit statement that the project scope does not exceed the work described in this category.

- Hot or cold in place recycling without pavement widening.
- Overlay without pavement widening.
- Full depth reconstruction without pavement widening.

Where the accident analysis shows a significant accident history attributed to substandard design elements, the project is not exempt from controlling criteria and may be a candidate for major redesign and reconstruction. Where the analysis shows accidents are concentrated in specific locations along the roadway segment, or at intersections, the project may still be advanced under the next category.

3. Isolated Safety Improvements

The following types of isolated safety improvements are exempt from all controlling criteria provided that there is no significant accident history attributed to substandard design elements on the section of roadway which is to be improved. In cases where there is a significant accident history attributed to substandard design elements, any controlling criteria applicable to the substandard design elements must be addressed. The Project File must contain documentation of the exemptions claimed under this category.

- Vertical curve adjustment.
- Horizontal curve adjustment.
- Intersection reconstruction.

4. Other Types of Exempt Projects

The following types of projects are examples of projects where the design standards should be consulted to ensure that applicable controlling criteria (e.g. horizontal or vertical sight distance) are not compromised by the proposed work. Any controlling criteria which will be compromised must be addressed. Otherwise, these types of projects are exempt from controlling criteria and do not require formal approval of design exceptions. The Project File must contain

an explicit statement that all work is within this category.

- Projects limited to installation or adjustment of guard rail.
- Projects limited to installation of signs, signals, and/or pavement markings.
- Noise Barrier Installation.
- Landscape Planting.