

Design Advisory

From Bradley C. Wieferich, Engineer of Design

Sidewalk Ramp Upgrade Policy Revisions

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Index:
Road Design Manual
Section 6.08.05

This advisory is superseded by any subsequent revisions to the references listed in this index.

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The FHWA Washington Headquarters and the Department of Justice (DOJ) has recently determined that resurfacing thickness can no longer be used as a threshold for determining the need to install or upgrade curb ramps on public Right of Way. This nullifies the previous FHWA Michigan Division definition of ¾" resurfacing thickness as an upgrading threshold. It will require the inclusion of curb ramp upgrades in certain projects previously considered maintenance treatments exempted by this threshold.

FHWA and DOJ jointly defined alterations (requiring upgrading) vs. maintenance (not requiring upgrades) by treatment type. The new treatment classifications for determining upgrade requirement have been tabulated in the Road Design Manual Section 6.08.05A.

The redefinition of upgrade thresholds will be effective for projects included in the March 2014 letting and beyond.

The provision of receiving ramps where sidewalks are not provided has also been modified. FHWA and DOJ have made a determination that curb ramps are generally not required in the absence of a prepared surface for pedestrian use. Ramps or receiving areas are no longer required in the absence of sidewalk or other prepared surface for pedestrian use unless pedestrian signals are installed or are in place. If neither sidewalk nor pedestrian signals are present but a worn foot path is evident, then a 5' wide curb cut must be provided to open access to the worn path (Road Design Manual Section 6.08.05G).