



STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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CAROLANN WICKS, P.E.
SECRETARY

MEMORANDUM

TO: Design, Construction and Maintenance Project Personnel

FROM: Donald D. Weber, P.E.
Chief Traffic Engineer 

DATE: June 26, 2007

SUBJECT: Placement of Traffic Loops

In recent weeks we have been asked to evaluate if the practice of placing traffic loops under the topcoat of pavement should be continued. The change to this method of placement was done for several reasons: to ensure timely placement of loops, to increase the service life and reduce maintenance of loops, and to increase their ability to remain functioning during future milling operations thus providing better traffic operations during future repaving projects. In addition, placing loops below the top surface of pavement provides a much cleaner finished surface.

In practice there has been benefit to having made this switch. At the same time we understand that at times it may be more difficult to manage and schedule the cutting of loops in coordination with the actual paving operations. In addition we have received a few complaints over the past several years from motorists and the biking community that it is more difficult for them to know where to be in order to trigger the light when the loops are not visible. Finally we understand from Construction that placing the loops on the top surface may simplify layout in relation to lane lines and stop bars etc.

In consideration of the request and after discussion with our Signal Design, Construction and Maintenance Sections we believe that while there is benefit to the current practice we are willing to consider a switch to placing loops on the top surface of pavement. As such we are directing that for future projects the loops should be placed in the top surface of the pavement. In agreeing to this change we are concerned that there will be delays in having the loops placed.

In addition the installation of loops on the top surface needs to be done with care. Saw cuts must be performed properly without going shallow at the corners and the loops must be sealed properly.

If we find this change leads back to delayed or poor installation methods we will revert back to the current method of placement. For projects in design, notes should be added to the plans that require the loops to be placed within 1 day (24 hours) of the final surface coat of pavement being placed and that failure to do so may result in suspension of work. For projects already in construction, particularly in the paving arena, this change may be made with the understanding that similar installation times as noted above will occur. Finally during all milling operations, the Transportation Management Center (TMC) should be notified of the specific signalized intersections that are impacted. Likewise the TMC should again be contacted, as the new loops are placed, so that the appropriate area can be notified for the splicing to occur.

We are allowing this change to aid your efforts and therefore expect your consideration and cooperation on the notifications and in getting the loops placed in a timely fashion. If you have questions concerning this, please feel free to contact me.