

South Carolina Department of Transportation

Engineering Directive

Directive Number: ED-31 **Effective:** August 18, 2026

Subject: Procedure for Reviewing Requests for “School Bus Stop Ahead” (S3-1) Signs

References: S.C. Code of Laws, Section 56-5-2770

Purpose: To update the Procedure for Compliance

Primary Department: Traffic Engineering

This directive details the procedure for reviewing and handling all school bus stop sign requests. The procedure as described below should be followed in reviewing requests from a school district or a citizen. When the resident maintenance engineer (RME) receives a request, the RME should review each location in the field and use the procedure below in making a decision on the signing.

The guidelines of Section 7B.04, of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), latest edition, are to be used when dealing with “School Bus Stop Ahead” (S3-1) sign requests with the following exceptions:

- a. In accordance with Document No. 1636, State Board of Education, Chapter 43 Article 5, Transportation Regulation 43-80, Paragraph F, the South Carolina Department of Transportation will use 600 feet for the clear visibility of a school bus stop.
- b. Based on the S.C. Code of Laws, Section 56-5-2770 regarding multilane highways, the 600 feet of clear visibility of a school bus stop is only required in the direction that the school bus is traveling when making its stop. A multilane roadway is defined as any road consisting of four or more traffic lanes, having at least two lanes in each direction. Section 56-5-2770 requires that “A school bus route that requires passengers to be loaded or off-loaded along a multilane highway or multilane private road must be designed to ensure that a student is not required to cross a multilane highway or multilane private use road.”
- c. Due to relatively low vehicle speeds and the widespread inability to obtain 600 feet of clear visibility, these guidelines should not generally be used within subdivisions or other areas with dense residential development where the speed limit is 30 mph or less. In such areas, “School Bus Stop Ahead” signs would not be needed.

If the stop is at a location that has less than 600 feet of visibility, the RME will contact the school district and request that they review the location to determine if the bus stop can be moved to another location with adequate visibility, as noted in Section 7B.04 of the MUTCD. The school district would need to respond to the RME in writing of their findings. If the school district indicates that the stop cannot be relocated, the RME would proceed with erecting the sign(s) and notify the school district or citizen in writing that the sign(s) will be erected. If the sight distance is limited from only one direction, the sign should be erected for that direction only.

If the review of a request for a school bus stop sign reveals that the stop has in excess of the 600 feet sight distance requirements, the RME will notify the school district or the citizen in writing that this location does not qualify. If there are other circumstances that the RME feels should be considered, the RME should notify the district office, and the district will review those locations and make a recommendation to the school district or citizen.

The RME must document all actions in this process in case there are questions at some point concerning the decision on a particular request.

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Approved by: Rob E. Perry, P.E.
Deputy Secretary for Engineering

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