Memorandum

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To: DEPUTY DIRECTORS
DISTRICT DIRECTORS
DIVISION CHIEFS

Date: April 25, 2002

File: 617

From: **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**
DIVISION OF DESIGN – MS 28

Subject: Exception to High and Low Risk Policy for the Statewide Exit Number and Vertical Clearance Sign Projects

This memo allows for a conditional deferral of the Caltrans Policy on High and Low Risk Underground Facilities Within Highway Rights of Way (High/Low Risk Policy) for the statewide Exit Number and Vertical Clearance sign projects.

Under memorandum dated February 22, 2002, from the Division of Maintenance and the Division of Traffic Operations, the exit number sign policy was outlined. In general, a minimum of two exit number signs for each direction of travel is recommended. It was also recommended to place exit numbers on overheads without changing the size of the signs. However, when this is not possible, the exit number sign should be ground-mounted.

In addition to the statewide exit sign project, a statewide vertical clearance sign project is targeted for completion by September 1, 2002. The objective of this Program Directive is to provide uniform application of signs statewide, and to make signs conspicuous and legible to motorists. For complete details on sign placement, see the Traffic Operations Program Directive Number 00-03.

This conditional exception will allow for the identification of high and low risk underground utilities, within the State highway right of way, concurrent with construction. Power equipment may be used for excavating exit number or vertical clearance sign postholes if it is determined that there are no utility facilities within 1.2m horizontally from the side of planned excavation. If the utility is located within this area, hand methods shall be used for excavation.

It should be noted that gravity sewers and California Department of Transportation utilities are not included in the Underground Service Alert (USA) utility

Identification, completed prior to construction activities. The designer should investigate the presence of these utilities to ensure that they will not be in conflict with construction.

Conditions of approval:

1) This approval shall not set or establish a precedent.
2) This approval only covers the statewide Exit Number and Vertical Clearance sign projects.
3) This approval defers the identification of high and low risk underground facilities concurrent with construction only and does not remove other requirements of the "Policy on High and Low Risk Underground Facilities Within Highway Rights of Way".
4) Each plan sheet for the contract shall bear the following note: "EXISTING UTILITY FACILITIES ARE NOT SHOWN ON PLANS. SEE CONTRACT SPECIAL PROVISIONS".
5) The Contract Special Provisions shall include the following:
   10-1. __ OBSTRUCTIONS (See SSP enclosure)
6) As always, the Contractor shall notify the Engineer and the appropriate regional notification center for operators of subsurface installations at least 3 working days, but not more than 14 calendar days, prior to performing any excavation or other work close to any underground pipeline, conduit, duct, wire or other service.

This conditional deferral of the Caltrans Policy on High and Low Risk Underground Facilities Within Highway Rights of Way (High/Low Risk Policy) is limited to the statewide Exit Number and Vertical Clearance sign projects. If you have any questions, please contact Julie Forsythe at (916) 653-8477.

Original Signed by
L. Fong
LINDA FONG, Chief
Encroachment Exceptions

Attachment

bc: LFong
PReilly
JForsythe
Design Files

JF:lmg

10-1.___ OBSTRUCTIONS

Attention is directed to Section 8-1.10, "Utility and Non-Highway Facilities," and Section 15, "Existing Highway Facilities," of the Standard Specifications and "Order of Work" of the special provisions and these special provisions.

2. Use without editing when High Risk facilities are on the project.

Attention is directed to the existence of certain underground facilities that may require special precautions be taken by the Contractor to protect the health, safety and welfare of workers and of the public.

Facilities conducting the following materials, whether encased or not, are considered to be High Risk facilities:

1. Petroleum products,
2. Oxygen,
3. Chlorine,
4. Toxic or flammable gases,
5. Natural gas in pipelines greater than 150 mm (6 inches) nominal pipe diameter, or pipelines with normal operating pressures greater than 415 kPa gauge (60 p.s.i.g.)
6. Underground electric supply lines, conductors or cables that have a potential to ground of more than 300 volts, either directly buried or in duct or conduit, which do not have concentric grounded or other effectively grounded metal shields or sheaths.

Facilities conducting the following materials are considered to be Low Risk facilities:

1. Natural gas in pipelines 150 mm (6 inches) or smaller (nominal pipe diameter) with normal operating pressures of 415 kPa gauge (60 p.s.i.g.) or less.
2. Underground electric supply lines, conductors or cables with a potential to ground of more than 300 volts, either directly buried or in duct or conduit, which do have concentric grounded or other effectively grounded metal shields or sheaths, and for which the utility owner furnished location information in conformance with the requirements of Article 17.7, "Location Information" of General Order No. 128 of the California Public Utility Commission, or electrical underground conductors with a potential to ground of 300 volts or less.

Power equipment may be used for excavating construction area sign postholes if it is determined that there are no utility facilities within 1.2 m (4 feet) horizontally from the side of planned excavation.

If these facilities are not located on the plans in both alignment and elevation, no work shall be performed in the vicinity of the facilities until the owner, or the owner's representative, has located the facility by potholing, probing or other means that will positively locate and identify the facility. If, in the opinion of the Engineer, the Contractor's operations are delayed or interfered with by reason of the utility facilities not being located by the owner or the owner's representative, the State will compensate the Contractor for the delays to the extent provided in Section 8-1.09, "Right of Way Delays," of the Standard Specifications, and not otherwise, except as provided in Section 8-1.10, "Utility and Non-Highway Facilities," of the Standard Specifications.

The Contractor shall notify the Engineer and the appropriate regional notification center for operators of subsurface installations at least 3 working days, but not more than 14 calendar days, prior to performing any excavation or other work close to any underground pipeline, conduit, duct, wire or other structure. Regional notification centers include, but are not limited to, the following:

Notification Center	Telephone Number
Underground Service Alert-Northern California (USA)	1-800-642-2444 1-800-227-2600
Underground Service Alert-Southern California (USA)	1-800-422-4133 1-800-227-2600