

Development Process for Department Standard Practices and Official Guidelines related to Transportation Engineering/Mobility/Safety

1. The need for a transportation engineering/mobility/safety related Standard Practice or Guideline may be determined internally within the Transportation Mobility and Safety Division, or may be suggested by another Department employee, government official, or citizen.
2. The request for a new Standard Practice or Guideline must be approved by the appropriate Unit Head or by the Director of the Transportation Mobility and Safety Division.
3. The draft document is developed by the appropriate unit or group.
4. The draft document is discussed with the Director of the Transportation Mobility and Safety Division (unless directed otherwise by the Director).
5. The unit/group's representative sends the draft document to all Division Traffic Engineers (DTEs) and all Regional Traffic Engineers (RTEs) requesting comments and suggestions. The draft document is generally sent via email. In the request for comments, the deadline for returning comments should be 4 weeks. Depending on the complexity of the topic, or preference of the Unit Head, it may be decided that the Unit/group send the draft document to all RTEs (with a cc to all DTEs) requiring that the RTEs coordinate with their Divisions and provide combined comments and overall recommendations to the unit/group based on the information provided to them from their Divisions.
6. The unit/group reviews and evaluates the comments and suggestions. The unit/group's representative documents the information if complex or controversial. A template for documenting the comments can be found under the TEPPL topic T73.
7. The unit/group's representative makes appropriate changes to the draft document. Follow-up clarification and/or additional feedback may be requested by unit/group's representative from DTEs and RTEs on any issues not resolved by initial comments or created by the initial comments received.
8. The unit/group will then make decisions and complete documentation of the comments received.
9. When other parties (such as municipalities, other agencies, or other departments) will be affected by the requirements of the Standard Practice or Guideline, the document may be sent to them requesting comments, or it may be sent to them for information purposes only. If requesting comments, the deadline for returning comments should be 2 weeks.
10. The unit/group's representative discusses the draft document with the Director of the Transportation Mobility and Safety Division, makes any changes, and prepares draft document for presenting at Operations Staff (OPS) meeting. See note * below.
11. The draft document is handed out or sent electronically at the OPS meeting for final review. A designated presenter generally gives a brief overview of the topic and answers any questions. OPS have until next OPS meeting to review and comment. See note * below.
12. The unit/group's representative makes changes to draft document if necessary based on comments and final decisions of the Director of the Transportation Mobility and Safety Division and the Chief Engineer. The document is then considered in final form for distribution. A distribution letter is prepared for the dual signatures of the Director of the Transportation Mobility and Safety Division and the Chief Engineer. See note * below.
13. After the distribution letter is signed, the Standard Practice or Guideline is uploaded as a TEPPL topic webpage on the Departments TEPPL website. The webpage will include a copy of the signed distribution letter, any designs, and may include web links to other pertinent information on the topic.

General Note: Standard Practices and Guidelines are sometimes revised after implementation or may have an addendum added. These changes will be posted on the TEPPL website with the date the revision or addition becomes effective.

* Note: If the document topic involves only internal (Transportation Mobility and Safety) issues that do not affect other Divisions, review by OPS and approval by the Chief Engineer are not required.

Type, Content and Structure of Document: Standard Practice versus Guidelines (Guidance)

Standard Practice:

A Department of Transportation *Standard Practice* includes statewide criteria and requirements and/or procedures. During development, every Standard Practice is reviewed by and closely coordinated with Division staff. The final document is approved by the Director of the Mobility and Safety Division and the Chief Engineer prior to implementation. Adherence to the requirements included in the document is required. The procedures and other information included in the document must be closely followed. The items included in a Standard Practice are considered *shall* conditions. If a Department Engineer or official believes a special circumstance or unusual situation warrants deviation from a Standard Practice, the Director of the Mobility and Safety Division, after coordination with the appropriate field Division Engineer(s), will render a final decision on the issue. A Standard Practice does not overrule a General Statute, North Carolina Administrative Code, or Policies approved by the Board of Transportation.

A Department of Transportation *Standard Practice* should include a purpose statement and general descriptive information about the topic at the beginning of the document. This is followed by a listing of the specific requirements (such as qualifications criteria) and procedures. A template for the development of a Standard Practice or Guideline is located under TEPPL topic T73. This template maintains the appropriate letter size, font, and layout when developing a new Standard Practice or Guideline.

Guidelines or Guidance:

Department of Transportation *Guidelines* or *Guidance* include information on a topic and may include criteria and procedures. Review and/or concurrence by Division representatives, the Director of the Mobility and Safety Division, or Chief Engineer is not required; however, depending on the topic, the Unit representative may request comments from field engineers or other parties. The information included in the document is intended to assist Department staff in implementing mobility and safety related topics. The content is generally not controversial. The content may be considered a *recommendation* on the topic from the appropriate Transportation Mobility and Safety Unit. A Division Engineer may implement a deviation from this type document without coordination. Department guidelines do not overrule a General Statute, North Carolina Administrative Code, Policies approved by the Board of Transportation, or a Department Standard Practice.

Guidelines may include a purpose statement, depending on the topic. The purpose may be apparent and unnecessary to list in the guideline. If included, the purpose statement should be at the beginning of the document. When applicable, general descriptive information about the topic should be included at the beginning of the document. The document should be formatted similar to a Standard Practice by title, font, and layout, but must specify that it is *Guidance* or *Guidelines* in the title. If the guidance includes a procedure, the items may be numbered rather than bulleted. If the Guidance is brief and only includes a statement or a few sentences, it may be written without bullets or numbered items. The Department may decide to implement *Guidelines* and then later decide to revise to a *Standard Practice*.

Both Standard Practice and Guidelines:

Depending on the topic, both a *Standard Practice* and *Guidelines* may include who is responsible for certain tasks, sign or device locations, parameters, distances, designs, engineering and administrative information, and Agreement and/or payment and other responsibilities. A Standard Practice or Guideline may be written to follow and further detail a legislative requirement, or another official document. In this case, the document should include references to the originating or related document. The business owner contact information from the originating source should be included in the document.