

**Subject: Warning Panels on Freeway "Reduced Speed Ahead" Signs**

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**From: Mike Reese <mikereese@dot.state.nc.us>**

**Organization: North Carolina Department of Transportation**

**To: Michael Stout <mstout@dot.state.nc.us>**

**CC: "Ron W. King" <ronking@dot.state.nc.us> ,  
Ayman Alqudwah <aalqudwah@dot.state.nc.us> ,  
"David W. Robertson" <d Robertson@dot.state.nc.us> ,  
"Susan B. Kunz" <skunz@dot.state.nc.us> ,  
"Timothy T. McFadden" <tmcfadden@dot.state.nc.us>**

Per our discussion this morning on use of Fluorescent Orange Panels above and below "Reduced Speed Ahead" and "Speed Limit" signs on freeways, I have discussed with State Signing Engineer Ron King, PE, and the Signing Project Engineers, and we have resolved as follows:

Since these orange panels are signs or are part of the main sign, colors should conform with the MUTCD as described in Section 2A-11 which define orange as "for construction and maintenance signs and shall not be used for any other purpose." Therefore, outside of construction zones, the orange color is inappropriate, but yellow or fluorescent yellow panels are acceptable by definition supplementally warning motorists of a speed limit drop at higher speeds (e.g. 65 or 70 to 55) on freeways. These yellow panels should be used only if deemed necessary by the engineer. Orange or fluorescent orange warning flags may continue to be "used to supplement other traffic control devices... mounted on the top portion of the device that they are supplementing" as described in the 1995 NCDOT Standard Specifications Section 1125.

Use of these orange panels has not and will not be shown on Signing TIP projects. A draft policy statement stating the above will be forthcoming. Please call if questions.

Mike Reese

29 Sep 00 1219