



National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

Chair's Message

MESSAGE 2023-#2
May 22, 2023

Gene Hawkins
NCUTCD Chair

Our June meeting is a little over a month away and there is quite a bit of information to share.

11th Edition MUTCD

The IJA deadline for updating the MUTCD has come and gone with no final rule. On May 15, the FHWA MUTCD website posted the following update on the 11th edition:

"The USDOT has been working diligently on a final rule for the next edition of the MUTCD. With the vast input submitted through the public docket, and the commitment to implementing the provisions of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, we want the new edition of the MUTCD to be as responsive as possible. We share in your enthusiasm for a new MUTCD and it remains a top priority for the USDOT. The next edition will be available soon."

I believe that we will see a final rule in the future, but my personal opinion is that the final rule will not be published before our meeting at the end of June. This is speculation on my part and is not based on hard evidence. Our plans for the June meeting have to be based on either the final rule being published before the meeting or after the meeting. At this time, assuming it will come after the meeting seems to be the best bet for the NCUTCD.

June 2023 Meeting

The 2023 Midyear Meeting will be June 28-30, 2023 in Tacoma, Washington at the Marriott Tacoma Downtown and the Greater Tacoma Convention Center. Meeting information has been posted on the website. A few key notes:

- **Council:** With concurrence from the Executive Board, I have decided we will not have a Council general session at this meeting. This decision is based on having no actionable items to consider and the expected lack of a final rule. The only agenda items for Council would be to hear the usual reports (technical committees, joint task forces, etc.) and to recognize new members. I have asked for written reports in lieu of the Council meeting and those reports will be posted on our website as our meeting summary.
- **Revised Schedule:** The revised schedule for the June meeting is:
 - ♦ **Task Forces and Multi-Committee Task Forces:** Task force and multi-committee task force (TF and MCTF) meetings will mostly be on Wednesday, June 28 in the afternoon so as not to conflict with the AASHTO CTE meeting that goes until lunch Wednesday.
 - ♦ **Joint Task Forces:** Joint task force (JTF) meetings will mostly also be on Wednesday, June 28. Some may be scheduled for Thursday evening. JTF meetings are limited to two hours. There are only four JTFs.
 - ♦ **Technical Committees:** Technical committees will meet all day on Thursday, June 29. Technical committees may also meet on Friday, June 30 as determined by the chair of each technical committee. Your chair will let you know whether your technical committee is meeting on Friday and for how long, if it is.
- **NCUTCD and FHWA Reports:** As is my normal practice, I will be circulating around to the technical committees on Thursday to make a few comments and answer questions. Since there will not be a Council general session, my comments may include things that I would normally say in the general session. The plan is for a member of the FHWA MUTCD Team to also circulate to the technical committees and give a brief update on the MUTCD.

- **Meeting Rooms:** Unlike prior meetings where we meet in a hotel, portions of this summer's meeting will be in the convention center. This means that we are paying for meeting rooms on an as-used basis. Therefore, NCUTCD attendees may not use a room for a meeting unless the room has been assigned for that specific meeting by Richard.
- **Proposed Changes to the MUTCD:** With the assumption that the final rule will not be published before the June meeting, I have instructed technical committee chairs to begin developing proposed changes to the MUTCD based on the NPA language for the 11th edition. Joint task forces may do the same. My recommendation to the chairs is that proposed changes focus on new content that was not in the NPA. Proposing changes to NPA language has the risk that the language in the final rule may be different from that in the NPA, potentially negating the work to develop the proposed change.
- **ARTBA Social:** The ARTBA Summer Classic will be 6:00-8:00 pm on Tuesday, June 27 at the Tacoma Art Museum, which is a short walk from the meeting location. Register for the event at <https://connect.artba.org/events/tsid-summer-classic>. The website also has a link to the flyer with more information about the event.
- **AASHTO CTE:** For those that arrive before noon on Wednesday, June 28, be aware that the AASHTO Committee on Traffic Engineering (CTE) meeting continues until noon that day. CTE registration is required to attend their meeting. Break refreshments on Wednesday morning are for the CTE meeting - please do not consume CTE refreshments if you are not registered for their meeting.

Bylaws and Operating Procedures Update: Related Terminology

A group has been working for a while on updating the Bylaws and Operating Procedures. That process is nearing completion. A significant focus of the effort is to provide consistent terminology. Below are a couple of clarifications to help you use the proper terminology when describing NCUTCD groups and/or activities:

- **Joint Task Force vs Multi-Committee Task Force:** JTFs are created by the Board and have equal voting representation from each technical committee, appointed by the technical committee chairs. JTFs may have non-voting members as well. There are currently four JTFs in the NCUTCD - CAV, Pedestrians, Roundabouts, and Rules-of-the-Road. JTFs can develop proposed changes to the MUTCD and send to sponsors for review, but must get technical committee approval before presenting to Council. MCTFs are created by two or more technical committee chairs, who appoint members as they please. Most of the groups that meet on Wednesday are MCTFs. MCTFs must work through the pertinent technical committees to advance proposed changes to the MUTCD.
- **Proposed Change vs Recommended Change:** Any change to the MUTCD is labeled as a proposed change until it is approved by Council. It is only after Council approval that a change is labeled as a recommended change or recommendation. Terms such as "draft recommendation" or "proposed recommendation" are not appropriate to use.

In Memoriam: Jim Pline, Jim Sparks

I want to recognize two individuals who have passed away this year. Jim Pline passed away on April 29 at the age of 91. Jim was an NCUTCD Honorary Member, the highest award we can bestow upon an individual. Jim's passing was unexpected, and in fact, he had sent me a couple of emails the morning of the day he passed. Jim served as the NCUTCD Vice-Chair for Research from 1988-1998 and was a personal mentor to me during my early years on the NCUTCD. Jim was also a past president and Honorary Member of ITE. There is a good summary of Jim's career on the ITE website at <https://www.ite.org/about-ite/history/honorary-members/james-l-pline/>.

Jim Sparks passed away on February 20 at the age of 82. Jim was a former Council Member and played an instrumental role on Council emphasizing the need to place greater emphasis on developing traffic control device criteria that addressed urban conditions. Jim's obituary is available at <https://www.azcentral.com/obituaries/par068078>.

Special Recognitions

It is always good to see one of our NCUTCD members receive a major award. At the 2023 ATSSA Convention and Traffic Expo in February, our own Neil Boudreau was given the ATSSA National Safety Award. This award recognizes an employee or recent retiree of a government agency who made a significant contribution to the safety of our nation's highways. Congratulations Neil!

Future NCUTCD Meetings

The January 2024 and 2025 meetings will be at the same hotel as the January 2023 meeting and both will also be at the end of the week of the TRB Annual Meeting. The dates for the NCUTCD meetings are January 10-12, 2024 and January 8-10, 2025. It is likely that we will continue to meet at the end of TRB week in 2026 and beyond as the TRB Annual Meetings for the next several years are earlier in January than has been typical. AASHTO has not yet determined meeting locations for the June 2024 or 2025 meetings.