



# Traffic Calming Special Authorisations

## **Introduction**

Legislation is now available to allow a wide range of traffic calming measures to be used on public roads. Some features may require special authorisation, and the purpose of this leaflet is to offer guidance to local authorities on how authorisation can be obtained.

## **Special Authorisations**

Where legislation does not clearly empower a local authority to install a particular feature, special authorisation may be sought from the Secretary of State. Authorisation ensures that the feature could not be regarded as an obstruction in the highway.

## **Monitoring**

There are a variety of reasons for assessing innovatory traffic calming features and road humps, as well as novel signing and road markings. For example: to determine their effectiveness; to report on the reaction of the general public; to note any unintended effects; to quantify changes in traffic speeds and flows; to determine the impact on the local environment.

Local authorities are likely to find it valuable to monitor the measures as they are installed and to report the results.

## **Types**

For the purposes of this leaflet 3 categories of special authorisation are identified. The distinction is made between these categories because the legislative base is different, and responsibility within the Department of Transport rests with different Divisions. The procedures for seeking special authorisation also vary. The categories are:

- Road Humps,
- Traffic Calming Features,
- Traffic Signs and Road Markings

## **Road humps**

### **Non-Regulation Road humps**

Sections 90A(1) and 90B(1) of the Highways Act 1980 were amended by Schedule 4, paragraph 12, of the Road Traffic Act 1991, clarifying the powers of the Secretary of State to authorise the use of non-regulation road humps on roads having speed limits of 30mph or less.

## **Applications**

Circular Roads 2/92, Road Humps and Variable Speed Limits, gives detailed information on the procedures for obtaining special authorisation of non-regulation road humps.

## **Use**

It is unlikely that special authorisation will be granted where it is possible to comply

without difficulty with the regulations, both in respect of the location and shape of the road hump. However, it is recognised that regulation road humps may not meet the operational requirements of certain vehicles, and highway authorities may wish to install other types of vertical deflection devices. These might include "speed cushions", "thermoplastic road humps" etc.

## **Trials**

Some highway authorities have carried out off-road trials of non-regulation road humps. The Department itself has carried out both on and off-road trials. In this way a degree of knowledge on the design of non-regulation road humps is being assembled. The Department does not wish to inhibit the introduction of innovative designs, and will not insist on off-road trials being carried out in all cases of innovative design. Informal discussions with the contacts given below, prior to any submission, might help avoid abortive applications.



*Off-road trials*



*On-road trial of speed cushions*



*On-road trial of thermoplastic road humps*

## **Regulation Road Humps**

These are constructed in compliance with the requirements of the Highways Act, Sections 90A to 90F and the Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1990. In 20mph zones the requirements for the use of road humps are relaxed. For precise information the regulations themselves should be consulted: the following publications provide guidance on the use of regulation road humps:

Circular Roads 3/90, Road Humps  
Circular Roads 4/90, 20mph Speed Limit Zones

Traffic Advisory Leaflets:  
2/90, Speed Control Humps  
7/91, 20mph Speed Limit Zones  
2/92, The Carfax, Horsham 20mph Speed Limit Zone  
2/93, 20mph Speed Limit Zone Signs

## **Enquiries on Road Humps**

Non technical questions relating to interpretation of the regulations, and matters relating to applications, should be addressed to:

Road Safety Division,  
Department of Transport,  
76 Marsham Street,  
London SW1P 4DR

Professional and technical queries should be addressed to:

Traffic Management Division,  
Department of Transport,  
76 Marsham Street,  
London SW1P 4DR

## ***Traffic calming measures***

### **Traffic Calming Act 1992**

This Act came into force on 16 May 1992. It makes "provisions about the carrying out on highways of works affecting the movement of vehicular and other traffic for the purposes of promoting safety and of preserving or improving the environment; and for connected purposes" and these have been inserted in the Highway Act 1980 under new sections 90 G-I.

It is concerned with a range of traffic calming measures, other than road humps.

It enables the Secretary of State to specially authorise traffic calming measures.

It enables the Secretary of State to prescribe regulations regarding the use and installation of traffic calming measures.

### **Special Authorisation**

Where a particular traffic calming feature is not covered by the traffic calming regulations, or where a highway authority is uncertain whether existing powers would allow the installation of certain traffic calming measures, applications for special authorisation may be made.



*Islands in conjunction with overrun areas*

Applications would be considered for novel features, and those which do not fully comply with the traffic calming regulations. For example, consideration could be given to rumble strips greater than 13mm in height. Careful justification of why the

measure should be granted special authorisation will be required.

### **Applications**

These should contain:

- a brief description of the scheme and its purpose, with a justification of measures in the scheme, estimated casualty savings (if appropriate), and comments (if any) from the police and/or the emergency services;
- 3 copies of a location map of the scheme showing the measures proposed;
- 3 copies of working drawings of the measures.

Applications for special authorisation of traffic calming features should be sent to:

Traffic Policy Division,  
Department of Transport,  
76 Marsham Street,  
London SW1P 4DR

### **Traffic Calming Regulations**

Formal consultations have been completed on proposed regulations. Advice will be issued once regulations are made. The following features are being considered:

Build-outs constructed on one side of the carriageway as an extension of, or, adjacent to the verge, footway or cycle track.

Build-outs on alternate sides of the carriageway to form a chicane.

Gateways constructed on the verge, footway or cycle track of a highway for the purpose of indicating the presence of traffic calming works of a description prescribed by regulations or specially authorised by the Secretary of State, or road humps.

Islands constructed in a carriageway to reduce carriageway width or to deflect the flow of vehicular traffic.





*Rumble strips in advance of speed limit signs*

Areas of carriageway where use of textured or coloured material appears to narrow the carriageway.

Build-outs on both sides of a carriageway opposite one another.

Rumble areas in the carriageway to generate noise or vibration in a vehicle passing over it.

### **Enquiries on Traffic Calming**

These should be made to:

Traffic Policy Division,  
Department of Transport,  
76 Marsham Street,  
London SW1P 4DR

## ***Traffic signs and road markings***

### **Special Authorisation for Signs**

The requirements of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) cannot be changed by special authorisation. If, however, innovative features are introduced for which there is no prescribed warning or informatory sign, applications can be considered for special authorisation. In devising new signs the general signing principles set out in the TSRGD and in the Traffic Signs (Speed Limits) Regulations 1969 should be followed.

### **Applications**

These should be sent to the appropriate DOT Regional Office and should include:

- A description of the scheme and any supporting papers from the emergency services etc. about the proposals.
- 5 copies of each site plan showing the location of proposed signs and any associated signing which affects the proposals.
- 5 copies of each sign drawing including details of colours and sizes. Novel signing is likely to be authorised initially for an experimental period and a report of its effectiveness will be required before further authorisation is considered.

### **Non prescribed Signing**

Where this has not been specially authorised, a non-prescribed sign has no legal basis. If it were claimed to have contributed to an accident the highway authority could be held liable.

### **Give Way Signs and Markings**

Some authorities have employed diagram 602 signs and 1003 markings (TSRGD) on the approaches to chicanes, pinch-points and similar measures. The current legislation does not permit this nor can the arrangement be specially authorised. When the TSRGD is revised it is the intention to allow the use of diagram 1003 markings with diagrams 615 signs in such situations but diagram 602 will still be reserved for use at junctions.

### **Prescribed Signs**

Traffic signs are currently prescribed in the TSRGD. Traffic Advisory Leaflet 2/91 lists the Regulations and Amendment Regulations currently in force. A major revision to the TSRGD is likely within the next 12 months.

## Road Humps

Signing for road humps is currently prescribed in:

- Traffic Signs (Amendment) Regulations 1983 (SI 1983/1088)
- Traffic Signs (Amendment) Regulations 1986 (SI 1986/1859)
- Traffic Signs (Amendment) Regulations 1990 (SI 1990/704)

Signing for narrowings, uneven roads, and traffic islands are prescribed in Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1981 (SI 1981/859).



*Gateway features*

## Enquiries on Signing

Authorisation procedures on all signs except speed limit signs:

Traffic Management Branch,  
Department of Transport,  
76 Marsham Street,  
London SW1P 4DR

Authorisation procedures for speed limit signs:

Road Safety Division,  
Department of Transport,  
76 Marsham Street,  
London SW1P 4DR

Sign design and materials:

Network Management and Driver  
Information Branch 6,  
Room 3/62,  
Department of Transport,  
St Christopher House,  
Southwark Street,  
London SW1 0TE

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The Department for Transport sponsors a wide range of research into traffic management issues. The results published in TAL's are applicable to England, Wales and Scotland. Attention is drawn to variations in statutory provisions or administrative practices between the countries.

Within England, enquiries should be made to: Traffic Management Division, Department for Transport, 2/07 Great Minster House, 76 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DR. Telephone 020 7944 2478. E-mail: [tal@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:tal@dft.gsi.gov.uk)