

REAL-TIME SYSTEM MANAGEMENT INFORMATION PROGRAM [1201]

Establishment / Purposes (§ 511.301 & § 511.305)

A final rule was published on November 8, 2010, creating a new section 511 under Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations that establishes a **real-time system management information program** pursuant to Section 1201 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). 23 CFR 511 establishes the provisions and parameters for the Real-Time System Management Information Program for State DOTs, other responsible agencies, and partnerships with other commercial entities in establishing real-time information programs that provide accessibility to traffic and travel conditions information by other public agencies, the traveling public, and by other parties who may deliver value-added information products. The information will be available and shareable to improve the security of the surface transportation system, to address congestion problems, to support improved response to weather events and surface transportation incidents, and to facilitate national and regional highway traveler information.

Funding / Eligibility (§ 511.307)

While SAFETEA-LU continued to permit Federal-aid funds to be eligible for traffic system operations and management activities, it did not provide separate, additional funding for real-time system management information.

Provisions for traffic and travel conditions (§ 511.309)

(a) Minimum requirements for traffic and travel conditions made available by real-time information programs are:

(1) Construction activities. The timeliness for the availability of information about full construction activities that close or reopen roadways or lanes will be 20 minutes or less from the time of the closure for highways outside of Metropolitan Areas and 10 minutes or less from the time of the closure or reopening for roadways within Metropolitan areas. Short-term or intermittent lane closures of limited duration that are less than the required reporting times are not included as a minimum requirement under this section.

(2) Roadway or lane blocking incidents. The timeliness for the availability of information related to roadway or lane blocking traffic incident will be 20 minutes or less from the time that the incident is verified for highways outside of Metropolitan Areas and 10 minutes or less from the time that the incident is verified for roadways within Metropolitan areas.

(3) Roadway weather observations. The timeliness for the availability of information about hazardous driving conditions and roadway or lane closures or blockages because of adverse weather conditions will be 20 minutes or less from the time the hazardous conditions, blockage, or closure is observed.

(4) Travel time information. The timeliness for the availability of travel time information along limited access roadway segments within Metropolitan Areas will be 10 minutes or less from the time that the travel time calculation is completed.

(5) Information accuracy. The designed accuracy for a real-time information program shall be 85 percent accurate at a minimum, or have a maximum error rate of 15 percent.

(6) Information availability. The designed availability for a real-time information program shall be 90 percent available at a minimum.

Effective Dates (§ 511.311 & § 511.313)

Establishment of the real-time information program for traffic and travel conditions on the Interstate system highways shall be completed no later than November 8, 2014. Establishment of the real-time information program for traffic and travel conditions reporting along the State-designated metropolitan area routes of significance shall be completed no later than November 8, 2016.

Request for Comments

While the FHWA is issuing this final rule, which will become effective on the dates noted above, the FHWA is also seeking additional comments relating to the costs and benefits of the Real-Time System Management Information Program and general information about current and planned programs. It is challenging to determine a comprehensive picture of costs and benefits given the flexibility of approaches that can be used and the limitations of the current studies. Therefore, the FHWA seeks comments related to the following:

- 1) What are the costs and benefits of each individual provision required under rule? If some provisions have net costs, would certain modifications to those provisions lead to net benefits?
- 2) What are the impacts of requiring these provisions on States and Metropolitan Areas (do some States and Metropolitan Areas realize net costs instead of net benefits)? If some States and Metropolitan Areas realize net costs, would certain modifications to provisions ensure net benefits?
- 3) Is there a specific, alternative approach to calculating costs and benefits that would be more appropriate than the current use of the Atlanta Navigator Study?
- 4) Although information dissemination to the public is not within scope of this rule, it is important to understand how information is typically disseminated so that the technologies used to collect and monitor data is compatible with technologies used to disseminate this information. This is especially important to keep up with new technological advances and to ensure that States use the most effective, low cost methods to both collect and disseminate information.
 - A) What technologies States will use to collect and monitor information under this rule?
 - B) What technologies are States planning to use to disseminate this information or what are they already using?
 - C) Do the technologies State plan to use present any interoperability issues? Do they allow for use of advanced technologies that could be the most cost-effective means of collecting and disseminating this information?
 - D) Are there any structural impediments to using low-cost advanced technologies in the future given the provisions and specifications contained in this rule?
 - E) Given the research investment into wireless communications systems in the 5.9 GHz spectrum for Intelligent Transportation Systems applications, to what extent could systems in this spectrum also be used to fulfill the requirements of this rule and/or enable other applications?
 - F) Given that there are legacy technologies in place now, and that there are new technologies on the horizon that are being adopted, how can we ensure that investments made today to comply with this rule are sustainable over the long term?
- 5) This rule defines Metropolitan Areas to mean the geographic areas designated as Metropolitan Statistical Areas by the Office of Management and Budget with a population exceeding 1,000,000 inhabitants. Is this population criterion appropriate, rather than considering traffic, commuting times, or other considerations?

November 8, 2010