

## MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Lock, Dam and Waterway Signs Guidance

## 1. Reference the following:

- a. EP 310-1-6a, *Sign Standards Manual*, Section 14
- b. Memorandum, CECW-OD, 8 June 2000, subject as above.

2. As indicated in reference 1.b., the waterway signs required under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Sign Standards Program should complement the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Aids to Navigation system and not be a substitute for that system (see page 14.1 of reference 1.a.). Therefore, in keeping with that intent, it is the policy of the Corps of Engineers that restricted areas and other hazards at our locks and dams and other waterway facilities may use a combination of daymarks and marking buoys as the primary marking system. These daymarks and buoys will display the Coast Guard-approved hazard warning symbols. These are the same symbols used in the Uniform State Waterway Marking System. Daymarks are signboards showing the USCG symbols. Because the sight distances for daymarks using only symbols are considerably less than those for verbal signs, the daymarks can be smaller and consequently less expensive than signs with the same message. This will help to eliminate concerns caused by the lack, in some cases, of necessary real estate interests, engineering difficulties posed by the size of large lettered signs, and concerns about excessively expensive large waterway signs at some facilities.

3. This policy does not eliminate the need for safety-critical, verbal waterway signs, as depicted in the *Sign Standards Manual*, if such signs are necessary at a given facility. It is the responsibility of the staff at each project, in coordination with the district Sign Program Manager, to determine the most effective mix of buoys and signs or daymarks. It will also be necessary to implement an appropriate public information campaign at each project when necessary to ensure that boaters understand the overall marking system in use, although boaters are already legally required to know the meanings of Coast Guard symbols and buoys. Justification for the hazard marking system chosen at each project must be carefully documented in a sign plan as described in the *Sign Standards Manual*. **A project does not have a complete Project Management Plan until the sign plan is complete.**

4. The deadline for the installation of safety-critical waterway signs (1 January 2001) has now passed and will not be extended. However, projects no longer need to apply for waivers to defer the deadline in those situations where a buoy/daymark system will be used in lieu of verbal signs.

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Projects are, however, expected to take action immediately to develop and install an effective hazard marking system at all sites that are not currently in compliance with the Sign Standards Program. This should be accomplished no later than 1 January 2003.

5. Existing signs, even if they are not in compliance with the Sign Standards Program, may remain at Corps facilities at the local manager's discretion. However, all new or replacement signs must be in compliance with the program. Reasons for a decision to retain non-compliant signage must be documented in the project sign plan.

6. The Sign Standards Program MCX will develop revisions to Section 14 of the *Sign Standards Manual* that will incorporate daymarks with size specifications and buoys as primary features of a waterway marking system. The waterway signs shown in the existing version of Section 14 will remain to complement and supplement the daymark/buoy system.

7. The use of daymarks and buoys is consistent with the recently published Lock Operations – Best Practices Report that the American Waterways Operators and Corps of Engineers prepared to enhance operational efficiency and safety at Corps locks and dams.

8. The guidance above has been developed after extensive coordination among various Corps elements. These included the National Sign Advisory Work Group and the Sign Standards Program MCX. Also included were Headquarters representatives of Navigation and Operations Branch, Natural Resources Management Branch, Office of Counsel, and the Safety and Occupational Health Office. Of great use during the process were suggestions in Ohio River Division's 1997 memorandum to HQUSACE on the subject of alternative hazard marking systems for some locks and dams.

9. If you have questions about lock, dam and waterway signs, please call Henrik Strandkov, National Sign Program Manager, at (651) 290-5578 or Michael Kidby, CECW-OD, at (202) 761-4692.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

/S/  
CHARLES M. HESS  
Chief, Operations Division  
Directorate of Civil Works

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