

## **PREAMBLE**

**AGENCY:** Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board.

**ACTION:** Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.

### *R209 Accessible Pedestrian Signals and Pedestrian Pushbuttons*

An accessible pedestrian signal and pedestrian pushbutton is an integrated device that communicates information about the WALK and DON'T WALK intervals at signalized intersections in non-visual formats (i.e., audible tones and vibrotactile surfaces) to pedestrians who are blind or have low vision. The pedestrian pushbutton has a locator tone for detecting the device and a tactile arrow to indicate which pedestrian street crossing is served by the device. The MUTCD contains standards for accessible pedestrian signals and pedestrian pushbuttons, but does not require that they be provided. The proposed guidelines require accessible pedestrian signals and pedestrian pushbuttons to be provided when new pedestrian signals are installed. For existing pedestrian signals, the proposed guidelines require accessible pedestrian signals and pedestrian pushbuttons to be provided when the signal controller and software are altered, or the signal head is replaced. Accessible pedestrian signals and pedestrian pushbuttons must comply with the referenced standards in the MUTCD and the technical requirements for operable parts in Chapter R4. Technical assistance and training on the installation of accessible pedestrian signals and pedestrian pushbuttons is available from the Access Board and transportation industry professional associations.[35](#)

### *Comments from Individuals Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision*

The National Federation of the Blind was a member of the advisory committee that recommended the proposed guidelines, but filed a minority report recommending that state and local governments consult with the local blind community to determine whether to provide accessible pedestrian signals and pushbuttons on an intersection-by-intersection basis. Comments on the 2002 draft guidelines from individuals who identified themselves as blind or having low vision supported providing accessible pedestrian signals and pushbuttons at each signalized intersection where pedestrian signals are newly installed or replaced by a margin of 2:1.

### *Governmental Units Affected*

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) directed that audible traffic signals be included in transportation plans and projects where appropriate. See 23 U.S.C. 217 (g). Some state and local transportation departments currently provide accessible pedestrian signals and pedestrian pushbuttons when pedestrian signals are newly installed or replaced at signalized intersections. The requirement in the proposed guidelines for accessible pedestrian signals and pedestrian pushbuttons will have impacts on state and local transportation departments that do not currently provide accessible pedestrian signals

and pedestrian pushbuttons when pedestrian signals are newly installed or replaced at signalized intersections.

*Question 9.* The Access Board seeks information on how many state and local transportation departments currently provide accessible pedestrian signals and pedestrian pushbuttons when pedestrian signals are newly installed or replaced at signalized intersections.

#### *Costs to Provide Accessible Pedestrian Signals and Pedestrian Pushbuttons*

The Volpe Center estimated the additional cost for an accessible pedestrian pushbutton compared to conventional pushbutton is \$350 per unit. For a typical intersection with four crosswalks, two accessible pedestrian pushbuttons would be required at each corner for a total of eight units per intersection and a total additional cost of \$2,800 for the eight units. The cost of the units is expected to decrease as a result of the proposed guidelines due to greater standardization of customer requirements and increased orders. The total additional cost to provide accessible pedestrian signals and pedestrian pushbuttons, including labor and other equipment such as stub poles and conduit, will vary by location. The Volpe Center estimated that the total additional costs are \$3,600 per intersection based on a published cost study and interviews with local transportation departments.

*Question 10.* The Access Board seeks information from state and local transportation departments that currently provide accessible pedestrian signals and pedestrian pushbuttons on the additional costs to provide the accessible pedestrian signals and pedestrian pushbuttons.

The Volpe Center estimated that pedestrian signals are newly installed or replaced at 13,095 signalized intersections on an annual basis based on the following assumptions:

- There are over 300,000 existing signalized intersections in the United States using a rule-of-thumb of one signalized intersection per 1,000 population.[36](#)
- There are 2,550 new signalized intersections in the United States each year based on the US Census Bureau forecast of future population growth (0.85 percent).
- Ninety (90) percent of new and existing signalized intersections in the United States provide pedestrian signals.
- The life cycle or replacement rate for existing pedestrian signals is 25 years.

The Volpe Center estimated that the total annual costs are \$47 million for requiring accessible pedestrian signals and pedestrian pushbuttons when pedestrian signals are newly installed or replaced at signalized intersections.

*Question 11.* Comments are requested on the assumptions used to estimate the total annual costs for requiring accessible pedestrian signals and pushbuttons when pedestrian signals are newly installed or replaced at signalized intersections.