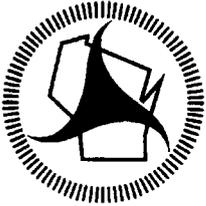


QA # 27602



Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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Governor

Charles H. Thompson
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October 3, 1997

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DOCKET SECTION

Re: Docket No. FHWA 97-2759-7

The Divisions of State Patrol and Motor Vehicles have reviewed the docket relating to English language requirements and have the following comments:

Our major concern when modifying this regulation is that drivers are able to understand road signs and the direction these signs give. Without some basic English skills, drivers may end up operating in the wrong direction or miss required exits.

In Wisconsin, enforcement has occasionally encountered some drivers who are not able to converse and understand enforcement officers. Our concern after NAFTA is fully implemented is that this could become a greater enforcement problem.

Our state law requires all applicants for operator's licenses to be tested on "their ability to read and understand highway signs regulating, warning and directing traffic.... In administering the knowledge test, the department shall attempt to accommodate any special needs of the applicant. Except as may be required by the department for an H or S endorsement, the knowledge test is not intended to be a test for literacy or English language proficiency. This does not prohibit the department from requiring an applicant to correctly read and understand highway signs. The department shall promulgate rules setting standards to govern driver license examinations and reexaminations. Such standards shall take into consideration any federal standards or requirements which may apply."

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed federal rule.

Sincerely,

William L. Singletary
Administrator
Division of State Patrol

Roger D. Cross
Administrator
Division of Motor Vehicles

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