

AASHTO SCOTE Survey – Passing on 3-Lane Roadway Sections

Submitted by Nevada DOT – July 13, 2016

Nevada is seeking information from states that allow passing on a 3 lane roadway such as the following:



Questions:

1. Does your state allow passing from the single lane side as pictured above?
2. If so, what conditions allow for this type of configuration?
3. Do you have a policy governing this type of configuration?
4. Anything else we should consider?

RESPONSES:

18 States and 4 Provinces allow passing on a 3-lane roadway.

11 States do not.

3 States have a few locations, but limits further deployments.

	Does your state allow passing from the single lane side as pictured?	If so, what conditions allow for this type of configuration?	Do you have a policy governing this type of configuration?	Anything else we should consider?
Alabama	Yes	Could not locate any specific criteria but it appears to be based on sufficient passing sight distance being available in that particular direction of travel.	Not that I am aware of.	Perhaps that our state's allowance of this maneuver could be based on the expectation that drivers will recognize sufficient passing sight distance and attempt the passing maneuver even if prohibited by a solid yellow stripe and therefore might be more likely to disrespect other legitimate passing prohibitions on other roadways. Maybe an opportunity here for a research project if none exist.
Alaska	Yes	Adequate passing sight distance per our state supplement.	Alaska Traffic Manual Sections 3B.02, and Figure 2B-100	Consider the number of passing opportunities outside of passing lane segments. If adequate passing opportunities exist for the opposing direction, that might be a reason to restrict passing from the one-lane side in a 3-lane segment. We have tried not to restrict passing opportunities in the opposing direction, as the 3-lane segment may be the best chance to pass. If there are generally few passing opportunities, and road volumes aren't particularly high, then we opt not to restrict opposite direction passing in the 3-lane segment.
Arizona	No			<p>About 20 years ago, there was a crash on a state highway in Arizona where a vehicle was traveling along in the same direction as the passing lane behind a large truck and changed lanes into the passing lane - just in time to have a very severe head-on collision with a vehicle using the lane in the opposite direction.</p> <p>The analysis noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the truck blocked each vehicle's view of one another the vehicle traveling in the same direction as the passing-lane assumed that they were free to use the passing lane without conflicts, since it was striped for their direction the vehicle traveling in the opposite direction as the passing lane saw a clear passing lane, until the other vehicle came around the truck and it was too late to avoid a collision <p>After the claim was decided (very) adversely against the state, all passing lanes on state highways were revised to a double yellow center line configuration.</p> <p>There's been a look at signs used by other states such as "No Passing When Oncoming Vehicle Present", but the current opinion is that they are likely to be misinterpreted either as "yeah, we know that already" or "it's OK to pass as long as the passing lane has no traffic, right?" - Not understanding the specific risks of this particular configuration.</p>
Arkansas	Yes	Nothing more than MUTCD 3b.02.	No	
California				
Colorado				
Connecticut	No on state highways		yes	We considered allowing passing on a 3 lane state highway when the OSTA standards were being updated a couple of years ago but decided against it. State highways typically have higher volume and speeds. Drivers in the 2 lane direction are supposed to stay in the right lane unless they need to move to the left lane to pass. Drivers moving to that left lane don't expect oncoming traffic in that lane. Drivers passing in the 1 lane direction would be surprised by an oncoming vehicle suddenly moving from the right lane to the left lane in the 2 lane direction.
Delaware	No	N/A	No	If someone proposed this, we would be opposed.
Florida				
Georgia				
Hawaii				
Idaho	Yes	AADT less than 3,000 and "Yield Center Lane to opposing Traffic" sign is required.		

	Does your state allow passing from the single lane side as pictured?	If so, what conditions allow for this type of configuration?	Do you have a policy governing this type of configuration?	Anything else we should consider?
Illinois	Yes	I'm only aware of this 3-lane configuration being used for truck climbing lanes. We may allow passing from the single lane side based on acceptable sight distance requirements.	No	In some locations, we have used a solid white line rather than skip dashes for the double lane side to discourage passing from that direction.
Indiana	Yes	May be used on segments with good sight distance		
Iowa	Yes	Adequate passing sight distance	No	We don't have a large number of these in Iowa, mostly used for climbing lanes on the few hills we have. It's only been used in a couple locations for a passing lane. Like Kerry stated, if there is adequate passing sight distance it is likely a driver will pass even if marked as a no passing zone.
Kansas	Yes	Striping is based on sight distance. If sight distance is not available or if by chance a portion of the 3-lane section goes through a special marked type of intersection (ie highway/highway junction), then no passing may be striped where needed. If an engineering study indicates a need for no passing due to crash activity, a recommendation for no passing could be made.	I know of no policy. Ideally, we like to create a 4-lane section for passing each direction (no passing is striped) within the same section. The Agency is constructing more passing lane sections on the highway system. As those sections become more frequent (3-lane passing sections) and depending on where they are located in proximity, striping practice could be revisited.	We are trying to increase passing opportunities where possible.
Kentucky	Yes	Handled no different than a two-lane roadway. Passing allowed if there is adequate sight distance.	No policy, but see attachment for signing detail.	We have debated whether this practice should continue. We have experienced situations where somebody pulls out to pass (from single lane direction) at the time that somebody initiates a passing maneuver around a slow moving vehicle in the two-lane section. One or both end up terminating their maneuver. However, since we have never been able to identify a crash history associated with this type of situation, we have continued to allow passing. I would point out that our normal application is where we are providing an isolated truck lane in mountainous regions. We recently constructed our first section of roadway with alternating passing lanes (2+1). On that facility, we elected to prohibit passing in the one-lane sections as one would not have to travel long before encountering a passing lane in their direction.
Louisiana	No			
Maine	No			
Maryland				
Massachusetts	1 location only	Truck climbing lane	No	We just received a complaint stating that it is a dangerous situation to allow this and will be looking to evaluate if we should remove the passing opportunity from this stretch of the highway.
Michigan	Yes	Placed as a result of: a. Speed reduction caused by heavy vehicles on prolonged vertical grades b. Slow moving motorists in combination with high traffic volumes or roadway alignment limiting passing opportunities c. More info located in the MDOT Road Design Manual (RDM) – Section 3.09.05	1) Design and implementation of these sections is governed by the MDOT RDM	Link to MDOT Road Design Manual Chapter 3 - http://mdotcf.state.mi.us/public/design/files/englishroadmanual/erdm03.pdf

	Does your state allow passing from the single lane side as pictured?	If so, what conditions allow for this type of configuration?	Do you have a policy governing this type of configuration?	Anything else we should consider?
Minnesota	Yes	Adequate horizontal and vertical sight distance.	Just our MN MUTCD, section 3B.2	
Mississippi				
Missouri	Yes	Normal provisions for providing a no passing zone through the evaluation of available sight distance or other special conditions.	Yes	
Montana	Generally No, do have a few locations.			For reference, see 2012 Permissive Passing on Truck Climbing Lanes State Survey Summary .
Nebraska	Yes	Passing sight distance.	No	Currently, only in climbing lane locations.
Nevada	No			
New Hampshire	No	N/A	No	When I first started attending the National Committee meetings in 2001, I was on the Markings Technical Committee. The Millennium Edition of the MUTCD had just come out and we were pouring through the material in order to identify the editorial changes that ultimately made their way to the 2003 Edition. When I first saw Figure 3B-3 indicating passing opposite the passing lane, I argued that the MUTCD shouldn't even show it as an option, but was reeducated by my peers from the more rural, flatter states that such practice was common. In the northeast, we have so few of these passing opportunities, they become race tracks with motorists in the passing lane passing as many vehicles as possible before losing the lane, often with poor sight distance in the opposite direction. We would never allow passing in the opposite direction.
New Jersey	No			
New Mexico				No specific laws for passing on 3 lane roadways in New Mexico.
New York	No	N/A	N/A	
North Carolina				
North Dakota				
Ohio	Yes	Proper sight distance, vertical and horizontal.	No	
Oklahoma				
Oregon	Yes			This is a topic we've just recently discussed in Oregon too. See ODOT Report TDE-2015-01 Passing Zones in 3-Lane Sections
Pennsylvania	No			PennDOT doesn't have any lane configurations as shown in your photo. We would be very reluctant to implement such a design.
Rhode Island				
South Carolina				
South Dakota	Yes	Typical passing sight distance criteria.	No	
Tennessee	No.		No, we have not done this type configuration	State law does not prohibit this type marking, but TDOT has not used this nor do we have it in any of our standard striping drawings. A question I have is to pass do both lanes in the opposite direction have to be clear or just the left. Seems both should be, but not sure if drivers would know this. Maybe in the western US they do.
Texas	Yes	Based on Site distance and engineering judgment.		ftp://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/cmd/cserve/standard/traffic/ts2-1.pdf
Utah				
Vermont				

	Does your state allow passing from the single lane side as pictured?	If so, what conditions allow for this type of configuration?	Do you have a policy governing this type of configuration?	Anything else we should consider?
Virginia		We do not know of any location in the state where we have allowed passing from the single lane in this configuration.	We do not have any policy that precludes the use of a passing zone in this scenario.	We do have this type of three lane configuration in VA, we typically use it for climbing lanes in our mountainous grade areas. Due to horizontal alignment in these cases, we do not have long enough straight sections that would allow passing to be executed safely from the single lane. One concern we have is that the driver in the single lane has to account for the activity in both oncoming lanes. A car traveling behind a truck in the right lane might not see (or be looking for) a car coming in the opposite direction in the left lane and decide to pull out.
Washington				
West Virginia	No			West Virginia doesn't have any passing zones involving three lanes sections (single lane versus multiple lanes in the opposing direction of travel) although I have not been able to locate policy/directive which specifically prohibits it. Terrain limits sight distance significantly here so opportunities would be very limited.
Wisconsin				
Wyoming	Yes	Must have passing sight distance and be on a road under 4,000 AADT.	Yes	We have found the need for additional signage to warn motorists and supplement the markings. We use a .64 cmf to install passing and truck climbing lanes. This cmf is eb corrected.
British Columbia	Yes	With sufficient sight distance and AADT less than 4000		
Alberta	Yes	With sufficient sight distance and AADT less than 4000		
Ontario	Yes	With sufficient sight distance		
Saskatchewan	Yes	With sufficient sight distance		