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Background: The Division of State Patrol (DSP) has received a request to authorize an Illuminated Stop Arm as optional equipment on a school bus which is authorized by Trans. 300.80. The purpose of this guidance is to improve the safety of pedestrians in the vicinity of a stopped school bus and prevent the likelihood of vehicles passing a stopped school bus displaying flashing red warning lights.

Question 1: May school buses be equipped with an Illuminated Stop Arm?

Guidance: The DSP approves the installation of an Illuminated Stop Arm with the following requirements and conditions:

- All requirements outlined in Trans 300.64 must be met or maintained.
- Only the required 2 double faced alternating flashing red lamps or the red flashing word "STOP" may flash when the flashing red warning lamps mounted on the front and rear of the bus are activated. No other part of the Illuminated Stop Arm may flash.

Trans 300.64 Stop signal arm.

- (1) A stop signal arm which meets FMVSS 131 and SAE J1133 is required on every school bus painted with the yellow and black color scheme. The stop signal arm may not be extended until the bus is completely stopped.
- (2) The stop signal arm shall be installed in such a manner that it cannot be activated unless the alternately flashing red lamps are in operation.
- (3) The following specifications shall govern installation of the stop signal arm:
 - (a) It shall be a metal, or material with strength at least equivalent to all-steel, as certified by the bus body manufacturer, octagon-shaped sign at least 18 inches wide and 18 inches long exclusive of the mounting bracket. All sheet metal parts shall be 16 gauge or heavier.
 - (b) It shall have the word "STOP" on both sides in white letters at least 6 inches high and 7/8 inch wide on a bright red background. The outer edge shall have a white border at least 1/2 inch wide. All other parts of the assembly shall be painted black.
 - (c) It shall be equipped with 2, 4-inch or larger, double faced alternating flashing red lamps to be mounted near the perimeter of the sign with a minimum of 12 inches spacing between lamp centers. These lamps shall be wired to the circuit of the flashing red warning lamps mounted on the front and rear of the bus. These lamps may be strobe lamps or light emitting diodes. In lieu of the 2 double faced alternating flashing red lamps, the stop signal arm may be equipped with red flashing, high visibility light-emitting diodes incorporated into the word "STOP," in accordance with the requirements of sub. (3)(b).
- (4) Reflectorizing of the sign shall be optional.
- (5) The stop signal arm shall be mounted on the left side of bus as close to the driver's window as practicable.
- (6) The requirements of this section for the operation of the stop signal arm does not apply to school buses which are operated only in areas where use of the flashing red warning lights is not permitted.

Sincerely,
Lieutenant Karl L. Mittelstadt
Division of State Patrol – Motor Carrier Enforcement Section