



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

August 18, 2011

In Reply Refer To:  
HSST/SS-173

Mr. Gary Lamolinara  
Special Lite Products Company, Inc.  
1634 Latrobe-Derry Road  
Loyalhanna, Pennsylvania 15661

Dear Mr. Lamolinara:

This letter is in response to your request for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) acceptance of a generic aluminum pole for use on the National Highway System (NHS).

Name of system: Generic Aluminum Support Pole  
Type of system: Breakaway Aluminum Support  
Test Level: NCHRP Report 350 Test Level 3  
Date of requests: December 27, 2010  
Request initially acknowledged: January 4, 2011

You requested that we find a 4-inch diameter aluminum pole with a 0.125-inch wall thickness acceptable for use on the NHS under the provisions of the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 350 "Recommended Procedures for the Safety Performance Evaluation of Highway Features."

### **Requirements**

Roadside safety devices should meet the guidelines contained in the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 350 if tested prior to December 31, 2010, and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' (AASHTO) Manual for Assessing Safety Hardware (MASH) if tested after that date. Requirements for breakaway supports are contained in both of these documents and in the AASHTO Standard Specifications for Structural Supports for Highway Signs, Luminaries, and Traffic Signals.

### **Decision**

The following system was found acceptable, with details provided below:

- Generic Aluminum Support Pole at 4-inch diameter with a 0.125-inch wall thickness

FHWA:HSSI:NArtimovichr:ms:x61331:7/14/11  
File: s://directory folder/HSSI/Artimovich/SS173\_Special Lite.dotx  
cc: HSSI (NArtimovich; JDewar)

## Test Descriptions

There were no tests performed pursuant to this request for product acceptance.

## Findings

As noted in your request, the FHWA has previously accepted a 6061-T6 aluminum alloy pole 4 inches in diameter, but with a greater wall thickness of 3/16-inches (Acceptance Letter SS-15, dated December 12, 1989). Acceptance Letter SS-35, dated May 28, 1993, accepted 3-inch and 4-inch diameter poles of the same aluminum alloy and with wall thicknesses of 0.125 inches. Therefore, the pole you described in your December 27, 2010 letter is also considered crashworthy. Therefore, the 6061-T6 aluminum pole with a 4-inch outside diameter and a 0.125-inch wall thickness remains acceptable for use on the NHS under the range of conditions originally tested, when such use is acceptable to a highway agency.

Please note the following standard provisions that apply to FHWA letters of acceptance:

- This acceptance is limited to the crashworthiness characteristics of the aluminum pole and does not cover its structural features, such as resistance to wind loads.
- Any design or material changes that may adversely influence the crashworthiness of the pole will require a new acceptance letter.
- Should the FHWA discover that the qualification testing was flawed, that in-service performance reveals unacceptable safety problems, or that the system being marketed is significantly different from the version that was crash tested, we reserve the right to modify or revoke our acceptance.
- You will be expected to supply potential users with sufficient information on design and installation requirements to ensure proper performance.
- You will be expected to certify to potential users that the hardware furnished has essentially the same chemistry, mechanical properties, and geometry as that submitted for acceptance, and that it will meet the crashworthiness requirements of the FHWA and the NCHRP Report 350.
- To prevent misunderstanding by others, this letter of acceptance is designated as number SS-173 and shall not be reproduced except in full. This letter and the test documentation upon which it is based are public information. All such letters and documentation may be reviewed at our office upon request.
- The aluminum pole identified above is not a patented product and therefore is not considered proprietary. If proprietary systems are specified by a highway agency for use on Federal-aid projects, except exempt, non-NHS projects, (a) they must be supplied through competitive bidding with equally suitable unpatented items; (b) the highway agency must certify that they are essential for synchronization with the existing highway facilities or that no equally suitable alternative exists; or (c) they must be used for research or for a distinctive type of construction on relatively short sections of road for experimental purposes. Our regulations concerning proprietary products are contained in Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 635.411.

- This acceptance letter shall not be construed as authorization or consent by the FHWA to use, manufacture, or sell any patented system for which the applicant is not the patent holder. The acceptance letter is limited to the crashworthiness characteristics of the candidate system, and the FHWA is neither prepared nor required to become involved in issues concerning patent law. Patent issues, if any, are to be resolved by the applicant.

Sincerely yours,

Michael S. Griffith  
Director, Office of Safety Technologies  
Office of Safety



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