

CHAPTER 20 DESIGNATION OF HIGHWAY ROUTES

Topic 21 - Highway Route Numbers

Index 21.1 - Legislative Route Numbers and Descriptions

The Legislature designates all State highway routes and assigns route numbers. The description and number of each route are contained in Chapter 2, Article 3 of the Streets and Highways Code. These route numbers are used for all administrative purposes.

The Legislature has stated its intent that the routes of the State Highway System serve the State's heavily traveled rural and urban corridors, that they connect the communities and regions of the State, and that they serve the State's economy by connecting centers of commerce, industry, agriculture, mineral wealth, and recreation.

A legislative route description generally runs south to north or west to east. To the extent possible, the number used on each route's guide signs is the same as the legislatively designated route number.

A specific location on any State highway is described by its post mile designation (formerly known as kilometer post). Post miles typically start at the west or south county line and end at the east or north county line. Generally, post mile information is available in the Caltrans State Highway Log, and is maintained by the Department's, Office of System Management Planning.

21.2 Sign Route Numbers

Each route in the State Highway System is given a unique number for identification and signed with distinctive numbered Interstate, U.S. or California State route shields to guide public travel. Route numbers used on one system are not duplicated on another system. Odd numbered routes are generally south to north and even numbered routes are generally west to east.

- (1) *Interstate and Defense Highways (Interstate System)*. The Interstate System is a network of freeways of national importance, created by Congress and constructed with Federal-aid Interstate System funds. Routes in the system are signed with the Interstate route shields (See Index 42.2 and Figure 21.1) and the general numbering convention is as follows: routes with one or two-digit numbers are north-south or east-west through routes, routes with three-digit numbers, the first of which is odd, are interstate spur routes. For example, I-110 is a spur route off of I-10. Routes in three-digit numbers, the first of which is even, are loops through or belt routes around cities. I-805 in San Diego is an example of a loop off of I-5. The numbering of Interstate routes was developed by AASHTO with concurrence by the states.

Renumbering of Interstate routes requires the approval of AASHTO to assure conformity with established numbering procedures. Such revisions also are a system action that must be approved by the Federal Highway Administrator.

The Transportation System Information Program is responsible for processing requests for changes to the system to AASHTO and FHWA for their consideration.

- (2) *United States Numbered Routes*. United States Numbered Routes are a network of State highways of statewide and national importance. These highways can be conventional roadways or freeways.

The establishment of a U.S. number as a guide for interstate travel over certain roads has no connection with Federal control, any Federal-aid System, or Federal construction financing. The Executive Committee of AASHTO, with the concurrence of the states, has full authority for numbering U.S. routes.

The Transportation System Information Program is responsible for processing requests for numbering U.S. routes to AASHTO for their consideration.

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- (3) *State Sign Routes.* State Sign Routes are State highways within the State, other than the above signed routes, which are distinctively signed to serve intrastate and interstate travel.
- (4) *Business Routes.* A Business Route generally is a local street or road in a city or urban area, designated by the same route number as the through Interstate, U.S., or State highway to which it is connected, with the words "Business Route" attached to the identifying route shields. The Business Route designation provides guidance for the traveling public to leave the main highway at one end of a city or urban area, patronize local businesses, and continue on to rejoin the main route at the opposite end of the city or urban area.

The Transportation System Information Program is responsible for approval of Business Route designations. Applications for Business Route designation and signing must be made by written request from the local government agency to the Chief of the Transportation System Information Program. U.S. and Interstate Business Routes require approval by the AASHTO Executive Committee.