

**NRA MANUAL OF CONTRACT  
DOCUMENTS FOR ROAD WORKS**

**Introduction to the NRA Manual of  
Contract Documents for Road Works**

**February 2012**

**Summary :**

This Introduction provides information on the NRA Manual of Contract Documents for Road Works (NRA MCDRW) used for national road schemes in Ireland.

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**VOLUME 0 NRA MANUAL OF  
CONTRACT DOCUMENTS  
FOR ROAD WORKS  
GENERAL PROCEDURES  
SECTION 0 INTRODUCTION AND  
CONTENTS**

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**PART 1**

**NRA SD 01/12**

**INTRODUCTION TO THE NRA MANUAL  
OF CONTRACT DOCUMENTS FOR  
ROAD WORKS (NRA MCDRW)**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Introduction

1.1 This Introduction provides information on the use of the NRA Manual of Contract Documents for Road Works (NRA MCDRW) for national road schemes (including motorways) in Ireland. In addition to information regarding the structure of the suite of documents, this introduction provides information about the background to the NRA MCDRW. Particularly it sets out the basis on which the documents are prepared, how they should be used and how future additions and updating are to be handled.

## Use of the NRA MCDRW for National Roads

1.2 The NRA MCDRW has been prepared by the NRA specifically for use on national road schemes (including motorways) in Ireland. The UK Highways Agency has prepared a Manual of Contract Documents for Highway Works (MCDHW) specifically for use on trunk roads (including motorways) in the UK. The definition of a trunk road is equivalent to that of a national road in Ireland. However, unlike the NRA Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (NRA DMRB) where parts of the UK DMRB are implemented, the NRA MCDRW is a standalone suite of documents. The NRA takes cognisance of developing trends, technology and developments in international best practice, including within the UK MCDRW, when reviewing the NRA MCDRW for potential updates.

1.3 The NRA MCDRW contains a combination of volumes including the Specification for Road Works, Methods of Measurement, Road Construction Details and Guidance Notes, which are incorporated directly into contracts in Ireland by reference. Users of the NRA MCDRW are encouraged to use the guidance notes in the implementation of all parts of the document, both for the development of contract documents and the undertaking of works under such contracts, for all national road schemes in Ireland.

1.4 In this Introduction document mandatory technical requirements are distinguished by the use of a text box as illustrated below.

3.7 The criteria given in Table 3 shall apply for all situations where the ....

## Use of the NRA MCDRW for Regional and Local Roads

1.5 The NRA MCDRW sets out the specifications, methods of measurement and road construction details, intended principally for national roads in Ireland. However, the suite of documents may also be applicable in part to other roads with similar characteristics. Where they are used for regional or local road schemes, it is for the relevant Road Authority to decide on the extent to which the documents in the NRA MCDRW are appropriate in any particular situation.

1.6 While the requirements given in the NRA MCDRW may be the best guidance available to Road Authorities, such authorities should ensure that their application to regional or local road schemes does not compromise safety, result in poor value for money, or have an unacceptable impact on the environment. It is recommended that any Road Authority making use of the NRA MCDRW should establish formal procedures for considering whether it is appropriate to depart from particular requirements (see paragraph 2.9 below).

## Implementation

1.7 This Introduction does not affect the individual documents within this NRA MCDRW or those used in the preparation of contract documents. The individual documents in the NRA MCDRW are to be implemented in accordance with the guidance notes given with each part of document and their inclusion in the NRA MCDRW allows for a systematic control on their retention and updating.

1.8 The NRA MCDRW shall be used for all schemes for the construction, maintenance and/or improvement of national roads.

1.9 While the NRA MCDRW is for use on national roads in Ireland, it is noted that all roads affected by national roads projects shall also be developed in accordance with specifications, methods of measurement, road construction details and guidance notes unless otherwise agreed with the relevant Road Authority and included within all relevant Contract Documentation for specific schemes.

### Scope

1.10 The NRA MCDRW embodies the collective experience of the NRA, their agents and design organisations over many years, and as such, represents an appropriate suite of requirements necessary to achieve satisfactory standards and quality of finished product in the delivery of national roads in Ireland. It provides technical requirements and guidance resulting from research and practical experience in the development and maintenance of the Irish national road network. It is continuously reviewed, to keep abreast of changes in practice and developments in technology, to improve safety, to reduce environmental impact and to give better value for money.

1.11 The NRA MCDRW has been prepared for use by appropriately qualified and experienced professional staff. It is not a statutory or regulatory document, nor a training manual; neither does it cover every point in exhaustive detail. Many matters are left to the professional expertise and judgement of users, while others are covered elsewhere, in Irish or European standards, in codes of practice and in specifications which are cross-referenced in the text. The technical requirements given in the NRA MCDRW must be adhered to for national roads unless a Departure is approved (see paragraph 2.9 below).

## 2. COVERAGE OF THE NRA MCDRW

### Contract Preparation

2.1 This NRA MCDRW includes the relevant Specification of Road Works, Methods of Measurement and Road Construction Details for use in the preparation of all contracts for national road schemes (including motorways) in Ireland. The NRA MCDRW has been developed to ensure that the relevant information needed to prepare contract documents is located in one place and is systematically controlled.

### Contents of NRA MCDRW

2.2 A separate document entitled “Volume Contents for the NRA Manual of Contract Document for Road Work” (SD 02, Volume 0, Section 0, Part 2) contains the contents listing for each volume of the NRA MCDRW.

2.3 In summary, the NRA MCDRW comprises:

- Volume 0: NRA Manual of Contract Documents for Road Works General Procedures
- Volume 1: NRA Specification for Road Works
- Volume 2: Notes for Guidance on the Specification for Road Works
- Volume 3: Method of Measurement for Road Works and Notes for Guidance on the Method of Measurement for Road Works.
- Volume 4: Road Construction Details

The current and superseded versions of all parts of the NRA MCDRW are available for download from the NRA Standards Website (<http://nrastandards.nra.ie/>).

### Status of NRA MCDRW

2.4 As with the NRA DMRB documents, all requirements contained in NRA MCDRW documents shall be considered to have the status of mandatory.

2.5 Any variation or waiving of a requirement contained within an NRA MCDRW document shall be considered a Departure.

### Departures from NRA MCDRW

2.6 Where application of the technical requirements in the NRA MCDRW cannot be justified for some reason, such as the environmental impact or cost, a Departure shall be applied for, based on a reasoned assessment. All proposals for Departures must be submitted to the National Roads Authority for consideration on their merits. Applications for all Departures shall be made in accordance with the procedures outlined in NRA ‘Departures from Standards and Specification’ contained in Volume 0, Section 0, Part C of the NRA DMRB.

## **3. DOCUMENT CONTROL**

### **Introduction**

3.1 Overall document control for the NRA MCDRW is provided through the Volume Contents for the NRA Manual of Contract Document for Road Work (SD 02, Volume 0, Section 0, Part 2).

3.2 The NRA maintains control and archive copies of all documents in the NRA MCDRW, through the NRA Standards Website.

### **Publication**

3.3 Parts of the NRA MCDRW are revised and issued periodically. Periodic publications of the NRA MCDRW will only include those parts that have changed, and these documents will be published via the NRA Standards Website. A notification will be issued to all registered users of the NRA Standards Website, alerting them to the publication.

3.6 For each publication, amendments and revisions to the NRA MCDRW are summarised in Section 2.0 of the Volume Contents for the NRA Manual of Contract Document for Road Work (SD 02, Volume 0, Section 0, Part 2).

## 4. REFERENCES

4.1 The following documents are referred to in this Introduction:

National Roads Authority. NRA Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (NRA DMRB).

Highways Agency and others. UK Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (UK DMRB).

Highways Agency and others. Manual of Contract Documents for Highway Works (MCHW).

## 5. ENQUIRIES

5.1 All technical enquiries or comments on this introduction should be sent in writing to:

Head of Engineering  
National Roads Authority  
St Martin's House  
Waterloo Road  
Dublin 4



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T. AHERN  
Head of Engineering