



Bonneagar Iompair Éireann  
Transport Infrastructure Ireland

## TII Publications

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# Departures from Standards and Specification (including Erratum No. 1, dated June 2013)

**GE-GEN-01005**

March 2013

**GE** General

**Standards**

## About TII

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) is responsible for managing and improving the country's national road and light rail networks.

## About TII Publications

TII maintains an online suite of technical publications, which is managed through the TII Publications website. The contents of TII Publications is clearly split into 'Standards' and 'Technical' documentation. All documentation for implementation on TII schemes is collectively referred to as TII Publications (Standards), and all other documentation within the system is collectively referred to as TII Publications (Technical). This system replaces the NRA Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (NRA DMRB) and the NRA Manual of Contract Documents for Road Works (NRA MCDRW).

## Document Attributes

Each document within TII Publications has a range of attributes associated with it, which allows for efficient access and retrieval of the document from the website. These attributes are also contained on the inside cover of each current document, for reference. For migration of documents from the NRA and RPA to the new system, each current document was assigned with new outer front and rear covers. Apart from the covers, and inside cover pages, the documents contain the same information as previously within the NRA or RPA systems, including historical references such as those contained within NRA DMRB and NRA MCDRW.

## Document Attributes

<b>TII Publication Title</b>	<i>Departures from Standards and Specification, Including Erratum No. 1, dated June 2013)</i>
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<b>Historical Reference</b>	<i>NRA GD 100</i>

## NRA DMRB and MCDRW References

For all documents that existed within the NRA DMRB or the NRA MCDRW prior to the launch of TII Publications, the NRA document reference used previously is listed above under 'historical reference'. The TII Publication Number also shown above now supersedes this historical reference. All historical references within this document are deemed to be replaced by the TII Publication Number. For the equivalent TII Publication Number for all other historical references contained within this document, please refer to the TII Publications website.

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**Departures from Standards and  
Specification (including Erratum No. 1)**

**March 2013  
(including Erratum No. 1, June 2013)**

**Summary:**

This document provides guidance on how to submit a Departure from Standard and Specification using the NRA Departures Website. The document also includes a description of what constitutes a Departure and provides details on submitting a Departure including what information the application should contain.

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**VOLUME 0 INTRODUCTION AND  
GENERAL  
REQUIREMENTS  
SECTION 3 GENERAL PROCEDURES**

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**PART 2**

**NRA GD 100/13**

**DEPARTURES FROM STANDARDS AND  
SPECIFICATION**

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Erratum No. 1

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# 1 IMPLEMENTATION

- 1.1 This Standard shall be known as NRA GD 100 Departures from Standards and Specification, and used for the design of all roads affected by National Road Schemes.
- 1.2 The January 2013 update includes changes to the treatment of Departures for schemes developed under NRA TA 85 Guidance on Minor Improvements to National Roads.
- 1.3 All Departures from Standard shall be submitted by or on behalf of the Road Authority. Departures will not be given for National Road Schemes that are not compliant with current DOECLG access policy to National Roads. If this Standard is to be used for the design of Regional and Local Road schemes, the Designer shall agree with the relevant Road Authority the extent to which the document is appropriate in any particular situation.
- 1.4 During development of the design; the Designer may seek a Departure from Standard where it can be shown that the safety of the user, operational effectiveness and design life are not compromised.

# 2 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 *National Road Schemes:* All works on National Roads that involve new road construction or permanent change to the existing road layout promoted by the *NRA*, a Road Authority or others.
- 2.2 *Employer:* The organisation managing the various phases of scheme preparation and supervision of construction or as defined in the Contract.
- 2.3 *Employer's Representative:* The Engineer or other person appointed by the Employer as it's representative in accordance with the Works Contract.
- 2.4 *Designer:* The Design Team undertaking the various phases of scheme preparation or supervision of construction.
- 2.5 *The Applicant:* The Designer at the particular phase of the scheme when the departure is required.
- 2.6 *Overseeing Organisation:* For National Road Schemes the Overseeing Organisation is the NRA. Where the scheme is not on a National Road, then the appropriate overseeing organisation shall be substituted for NRA.
- 2.7 *Approved Departure:* An approved Departure shall be considered as meeting the NRA's requirements for that element of the works, provided that any mitigation measures proposed by the designer or conditional to that approval are also incorporated into the design and works.
- 2.8 *Refused Departure:* Where the decision of the NRA is that the Departure proposed is unacceptable.
- 2.9 *Rejected Departure:* Where insufficient, inappropriate or contradictory information has been submitted as part of the Departure Application. Further information may be required and it is not possible to form a conclusive decision to Approve or Refuse the application.
- 2.10 *Minor Improvement Scheme:* As defined in NRA TA 85 Guidance on Minor Improvements to National Roads.

## 3 DEPARTURES

3.1 A Departure from Standard shall mean any of the following:

- a) A Departure from any of the mandatory requirements of the NRA DMRB;
- b) The use of technical design standards other than those in the NRA DMRB;
- c) The use of technical specifications other than those contained in the NRA Manual of Contract Documents for Road Works;
- d) The use of a set of requirements or additional criteria for any aspect of the Works for which requirements are not defined in the Contract;
- e) The use of a technical design standards or technical specification in a manner or circumstance which is not permitted or provided for in such directive or specification;
- f) A combination of any of the criteria specified above.<sup>1</sup>

3.2 <sup>2</sup>While the Approval of a Departure shall be considered as meeting the NRA's requirements for that element of the works (subject to section 2.7 above), the following should be noted with respect to Approved Departures:

- a) The approval of an application in no way precludes the NRA from requesting that certain safety measures be carried out at a future date in relation to the approvals given.
- b) The approval of a Departure, with or without comments, does not imply that the NRA relieves the designer of any responsibility for the design;
- c) Departures are approved on a location-specific basis and relate to the particular circumstances identified in each submission. A similar Departure approval may be quoted to support a new application, but each case will be considered on its own merits;
- d) The NRA may allow "bulk" Departures (when the same non-standard method or material is proposed for use at more than one location) in certain, clearly defined circumstances.

3.3 The following are variations that are not considered as constituting a Departure from Standard:

- a) Suggestions/Recommendations within NRA DMRB;
- b) Anything contained within Advice Notes – adopted as 'best practice' advice or as background information only. (Generally to be read in conjunction with a related standard.);
- c) Relaxations – these need to be recorded in the Departures Report, but a formal application does not need to be completed.

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<sup>1</sup> Amended as per Erratum No. 1, item 1

<sup>2</sup> Amended as per Erratum No. 1, item 2

## 4 SUBMITTING A DEPARTURE

- 4.1 All Departures, with the exception of Tender Departures, are to be digitally inputted on the NRA Web-based Departures Database at <http://nrastandards.nra.ie>. Applicants are required to pre-register **by email to [dmrbdeps@nra.ie](mailto:dmrbdeps@nra.ie)** prior to inputting Departures. Applicants shall be one named individual working on behalf of the Designer for the applicable stage of the road scheme.
- 4.2 Applicants should allow a **minimum** of 3 weeks from receipt of applications by the NRA to notification of decision. (This will take longer for larger schemes with a large number of applications – especially during the D&B/PPP Tender process where there may be multiple sets of Departure requests). The time taken to assess Departures will depend on the number of applications; the quality of information submitted and scheme priority. Accordingly, applications should be submitted as early as possible so as to avoid delays.
- 4.3 If a scheme with a large number of applications is to be submitted, then advance notice should be sent to the NRA Standards Section ([infoDEPS@nra.ie](mailto:infoDEPS@nra.ie)) in order that the applications can be dealt with as swiftly as possible. In the case of Design & Build or PPP schemes, information contained in the Contract Documents regarding the submission of Departures should be forwarded to the NRA Standards Section for information (this applies in particular to the timetable for submission of Departures during the tendering process).

### Preliminary Design

- 4.4 Preliminary Design Departures are to be submitted to the NRA on the NRA Web-based Departures Database a minimum of two months **prior to** incorporation into the design, and well in advance of the finalisation of the landtake line for Statutory Planning Procedures/Tender Stage. Preliminary Design Departures submitted after the date of statutory process may infringe on lands outside of the CPO and will be considered on merit only.
- 4.5 When the designer proposes to specify Works Requirements that require the approval of a Departure from the NRA DMRB or an approval in relation to the NRA Specification then these should be applied for and obtained before incorporation into the Contract Documents.

### Minor Improvement Schemes

- 4.6 NRA TA 85 Guidance on Minor Improvements to National Roads includes design principles and requirements for Minor Improvement Schemes and Road Safety Improvement Schemes. An important requirement of NRA TA 85 is the preparation of a Preliminary Design Report, including reference to Relaxations and Departures from the NRA DMRB. Refer to NRA TA 85 for confirmation of all information to be contained within such Preliminary Design Reports.
- 4.7 All proposed Relaxations and Departures for schemes prepared using NRA TA 85 shall be identified by the relevant Road Authority and organised as one single Departure application for each scheme (excluding the requirements of section 4.11 below). This single Departure shall be submitted to the NRA through the NRA Departures Database for approval, as with all Departures as per the requirements of this NRA GD 100 Standard.
- 4.8 The NRA TA 85 Preliminary Design Report (in draft form) shall form part of the Departure application and shall be submitted as an attachment to the Departure application. The draft NRA TA 85 Preliminary Design Report shall separately be sent to the NRA Inspector for the scheme.

- 4.9 Both the single Departure application and the draft NRA TA 85 Preliminary Design Report shall be submitted to the NRA through the NRA Web-based Departures Database a minimum of two months **prior to** incorporation into the final design, and well in advance of the finalisation of the landtake line for Statutory Planning Procedures/Tender Stage. Departures under NRA TA 85 submitted after the date of statutory process may infringe on lands outside of the CPO and will be considered on merit only.
- 4.10 The NRA Standards Section will Approve, Refuse or Reject all Departures submitted to the NRA through the NRA Departures Database. The NRA Standards Section may also Refuse the draft NRA TA 85 Preliminary Design Report if the draft NRA TA 85 Preliminary Design Report, and corresponding Departures, are not considered to comply with the requirements of NRA TA 85.
- 4.11 All Departures relating to the NRA Manual of Contract Documents for Road Works shall be submitted separately to the NRA for approval as appropriate.

### Tender Stage

- 4.12 During the Design & Build Tender Process, Tender Stage Departures are **not** to be entered onto the NRA Web-based Departures Database. Instead, an **MS Word copy** of all the departure applications should be emailed to both the Employer's Representative and the NRA Standards Section ([infoDEPS@nra.ie](mailto:infoDEPS@nra.ie)).
- 4.13 A corresponding hardcopy of the Departure applications, including drawings, calculations and any other relevant information, are also to be submitted as follows:
- Cover letter with **1 full set** of Departures applications, including a hardcopy print of the Departure Application Forms to the **Engineering Standards Section of the NRA.**
  - Cover letter with **1 full set** of Departures applications, including a hardcopy print of the Departure Application Forms to the **Employer's Representative;**
- 4.14 The Employer's Representative prepares comments on the Tenderer's Departure applications using the Tender Comparison Table attached in Appendix C and forwards these to the NRA Standards Section ([infoDEPS@nra.ie](mailto:infoDEPS@nra.ie)) within 7 days of receipt of the reports.
- 4.15 During the Tender Phase, a PDF copy of the decision will be emailed to the Employer's Representative as appropriate. The Employer's Representative shall confirm the decision of the NRA to the applicant, the Local Authority and the NRA Engineering Inspector as appropriate.

### Construction Phase

- 4.16 Construction Departures are to be digitally inputted on the NRA Web-based Departures Database at <http://nrastandards.nra.ie> by the Contractor.
- 4.17 During the Construction Phase, a PDF copy of the application will be emailed directly by the web-based database to the Employer's Representative as appropriate.
- 4.18 A corresponding hardcopy of the Departure applications, including drawings, calculations and any other relevant information, are also to be submitted to the **Employer's Representative;**
- 4.19 The Employer's Representative shall prepare comments on the Applicant's Departure applications and forwards these comments to [infoDEPS@nra.ie](mailto:infoDEPS@nra.ie) within 7 days of receipt of the reports.

- 4.20 During the Construction Phase, a PDF copy of the decision will be emailed to the Employer's Representative as appropriate. The Employer's Representative shall confirm the decision of the NRA to the applicant, the Local Authority and the NRA Engineering Inspector as appropriate.
- 4.21 Departures will be processed as quickly as possible during the Construction Stage/Detailed Design; however, as in all cases, a minimum of 3 weeks should be allowed for processing of applications.

## 5 DEPARTURE DECISION PROCESS

- 5.1 The decision of the NRA in relation to each Departure Application may be to:
- Approve the Departure;
  - Refuse the Departure; or
  - Reject the Departure.
- 5.2 All departures are submitted to the relevant section of the NRA for comments and shall be processed as appropriate. All queries relating to the current departures are to be emailed to [infoDMRB@nra.ie](mailto:infoDMRB@nra.ie)
- 5.3 All comments/recommendations are recorded in the database and approval and refusal numbers are assigned as appropriate and are digitally sent to the applicant via the NRA web-based database.
- 5.4 Approvals, once issued electronically, are deemed to have been signed by the NRA Head of Network Management, Engineering Standards & Research.

## 6 DETAILS REQUIRED

6.1 The following details shall as a minimum be included in all Departure reports:

- A short description of the scheme, including details of the type of contract, the stage the scheme is at and other background information. The outcome of any Safety Audits and Statutory Processes should also be detailed if applicable. For schemes prepared using NRA TA 85, the Preliminary Design Report shall form part of the Departure application (see section 4).
- Road Authority agreement: If a third party is submitting a proposed departure, details of the Road Authorities agreement to the proposed departure, and to its being submitted on the Road Authorities behalf, should be submitted.
- A Departure Application Form (as printed from Departures Website for each individual application). The application *should contain sufficient detail to enable a recommendation to be made on the application*. It is particularly important that the 'Justification' section is fully completed, and a detailed reason given why the Departure is being sought. If alternative designs have been considered in order to avoid the Departure, these should be outlined. Proposed compensatory measures should also be outlined where applicable.
- A detailed drawing for each Departure showing plan and long section (in all cases), so geometric details can be ascertained. This drawing should also show (with dotted lines or different colours) how the area of the scheme would look if the correct standards were applied. The drawing should clearly show the scale used. This enables the reviewer to see the difference between standard and sub-standard design and to understand more clearly the justification for the Departure.
- Drawing(s) of the entire scheme (at min scale of 1:10000), so the reviewer can see how the Departure fits in with the overall scheme.
- Contact details for the Employer's Representative and/or who to contact for further information.
- If an application does not contain sufficient information for assessment, then the Departure will be returned to the applicant, and a subsequent time-frame for assessment cannot be guaranteed. A 'Departure Application Checklist' has been provided in **Appendix B** which should be completed and returned with the Departures Report.

## **7 ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED DEPARTURES**

- 7.1 Where required that Departures are to be submitted electronically, the NRA web-based database will be the only mechanism for processing of these departures.
- 7.2 Global co-ordinates shall be included for each separate element included in an electronically submitted Departure, where the most appropriate point along the length of each element is located by co-ordinates, or in the case of scheme-wide Departures, the start chainage for the works on the designed centre-line of the road.

## 8 ENQUIRIES

- 8.1 All technical enquiries or comments on this document or any of the documents listed as forming part of the NRA DMRB should be sent by e-mail to [infoDMRB@nra.ie](mailto:infoDMRB@nra.ie), addressed to the following:

Head of Network Management, Engineering Standards & Research  
National Roads Authority  
St Martin's House  
Waterloo Road  
Dublin 4



.....  
Pat Maher  
Head of Network Management,  
Engineering Standards & Research

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

**ERRATUM No. 1 (June 2013) to NRA GD 100 – Departures from  
Standards and Specification Dated March 2013**

NRA GD 100 – Departures from Standards and Specification Dated March 2013 is amended as follows:-

1. Page 4, Paragraph 3.1

Add the following text as a further bullet under this paragraph ‘(f) A combination of any of the criteria specified above.’

1. Page 4, Paragraph 3.2

Delete the following text from the first sentence under this paragraph ‘A combination of any of the criteria specified above.’

## Appendix A – Departure Application Form

Application for a Departure from the NRA Design Manual for Roads and Bridges during the Tender Stage Only

<b>General Information:</b>		
Route:	Scheme:	Contract Type: (e.g. PPP /D&B/ Traditional)
Design Speed	Traffic Flow and Composition (if applicable):	
Carriageway Type/Cross Section		

<b>Applicant Information:</b>	
Applicant Name:	Contact Person and Contact Details:
Applicants Departure Reference No.	

<b>Departure Information:</b>
Departure Location and Chainage:
Departure Category (e.g. Road Design, Structures etc.)
Departure Type (e.g. Horizontal Geometry, Vertical Geometry, Cross Section, etc.)
Standard Required by NRA DMRB
Standard Provided
Departure Justification
Other Departures or Relaxations at same location

<b><i>NRA DMRB References:</i></b>	
NRA DMRB/MCDRW Reference (e.g. TD 9/05 etc):	NRA DMRB Paragraph/Table/Figure:
<b>Additional Information and Supporting Documentation List:</b>	

<b>RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL (FOR NRA USE ONLY)</b>	
<b>Recommendation on Application</b>	
<i>Signature:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<b>National Roads Authority Approval</b>	
<i>Signature:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<b>Head of Engineering</b>	
NRA Reference Number:	

## Appendix B – Departure Application Checklist

<b>General:</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
Has the Cover Sheet for the Departure Report been completed?	
Is it clear who the Employer is and who the official response should issue to?	
Has sufficient background information been given to ascertain the stage the scheme is at?	
Have any time constraints regarding receiving a decision on the application been outlined?	
Has the Road Authority been consulted?	

<b>Application:</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
Has an individual application form been completed for each Departure?	
Have the application form(s) been submitted via the NRA Web-based Database to the NRA Project Manager (Engineering Standards) to speed up the database input process?	
Has a plan and longitudinal section been provided for each geometry Departure?	
Does the drawing show how the area of the scheme would look should the correct standard be applied?	
Does the justification give sufficient information for a person not familiar with the scheme to be able to make a recommendation?	
Have any alternatives considered been outlined and shown on the drawings submitted?	
Have possible mitigation measures been outlined?	

<b>D&amp;B/PPP Schemes:</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
Has the tendering timetable been submitted to the NRA Project Manager (Engineering Standards)?	
Has the full set been submitted to the NRA Project Manager (Engineering Standards)?	
Have the structures Departures (Volume 2) been submitted directly to NRA Structures Section?	
Has the Employer's Representative commented on all applications?	

## Appendix C – Tender Comparison Table

Departure Location & Chainage	Departure Category and Classification	Departure Type	Details	Status	NRA Reference	Application Comments	Bidder 1 (B1)	Bidder 2 (B2)	Bidder 3 (B3)	Bidder 4 (B4)	Bidder 5 (B5)	Specimen Design
<i>e.g.</i>												
<i>Mainline and associated side roads</i>	<i>Drainage</i>	<i>Thermoplastic Structured Wall Pipes (HAPAS 02/H068)</i>	<i>HAPAS Cert 02/H068</i>			<i>This application is recommended for APPROVAL for pipes and fittings other than those included in Table 5/2 provided that they hold a current Irish (or British) Agreement Board Roads and Bridges Certificate (or equivalent) stating that they are a suitable alternative for the usage specified in Table 5/2. They shall comply with all other requirements of Series 500 and with the standards and particular requirements therein and be of 100mm internal diameter unless otherwise described.</i>	<i>Applicants Reference</i>	<i>SpecDes_D01</i>				
<i>Whole Scheme</i>	<i>Pavement</i>	<i>Reduction of PSV in HRA</i>	<i>PSV=40</i>			<i>This application is recommended for REFUSAL as a reduction in PSV has implications for skid resistance and cannot be considered.</i>			<i>Applicants Reference</i>			





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