

**Guidelines for Filling out a
Request for Authority to
Alter Highway-Rail Crossings
Pursuant to Commission General Order 88-B**



**I. CRITERIA FOR COMMISSION GENERAL ORDER 88-B PROJECTS
AUTHORIZATION REQUEST**

Review the scope of Commission General Order (GO) 88-B projects listed below. All parties, including Commission [Rail Crossing and Engineering Branch \(RCEB\)](#) staff, must agree to the project. If the project falls outside of this scope or if any stakeholder objects to the proposed project, then the requestor must file a [formal application](#) with the Commission.

Scope of Commission GO 88-B

1. Grade crossing widening within the existing street right-of-way.
2. Approach grade changes.
3. Track elevation changes.
4. Roadway realignment that is functionality related to the existing crossing and can be achieved within the existing or a contiguous right-of-way.
5. Addition of one track within the existing railroad right-of-way.
6. Change in the type or addition of an automatic signaling device, crossing gate, crossing flagman or other forms of crossing protection or reduction of hours during which any such protection is maintained, or other minor alterations.
7. Alterations or reconstruction of an existing grade-separated crossing, where exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to California Public Resources (PR) Code Section 21080.13.
8. Construction of a grade-separation that eliminates an existing at-grade highway-rail crossing, where exempt from CEQA pursuant to PR Code Section 21080.13

In addition to the above scope, any other alterations that may impact the safety of the crossings shall be discussed with RCEB staff to determine whether the proposed alterations will require a Commission GO 88-B request.

II. COMMISSION GO 88-B PROJECT AUTHORIZATION REQUEST PROCESS

Obtaining authorization to alter a highway-rail crossing is an iterative process that may require multiple rounds of project review. During the design stage, RCEB staff may request additional information and/or studies to provide an understanding of how the proposed alterations will affect the crossing safety.

It is advisable to reach out early and keep RCEB staff involved throughout the design stage, so that any issues/concerns can be brought up, discussed, and resolved prior to finalizing the design and submitting the Commission GO 88-B

request. RCEB staff is available to answer questions or provide feedback at any stage of a project, including preliminary or conceptual design of a project.

Upon official signed submission of the Commission GO 88-B project authorization request, RCEB staff will review and provide a response within 45 days.

Steps to obtain Commission GO 88-B Project Authorization:

1. Contact the area or County RCEB Utilities Engineer (UE) from the link below. The RCEB UE will be the main RCEB point of contact for the project.

[RCEB Contact Information](#)

The RCEB UE will provide information on the Commission GO 88-B process and advise the requesting party on arranging a diagnostic meeting to review the proposed alterations to the crossing(s).

2. The diagnostic meeting shall be held with representatives from all interested parties (rail organization, roadway authority, and RCEB staff), forming the diagnostic team. The diagnostic team will evaluate the proposed alterations and identify any other matters that should be addressed as part of the proposed project. RCEB staff shall determine the minimum necessary treatments needed for the crossing.

The diagnostic meeting shall consist of two parts:

- a. Virtual Pre-Diagnostic: *to be held via video conference with the diagnostic team to initially go over the project and provide preliminary input on the proposed alterations.*
- b. Field Diagnostic: *to be held in the field at the crossing to evaluate the existing conditions and operation of the crossing and provide additional input based on field observations.*

In certain cases, such as new grade-separated crossings, and where all parties agree, a field diagnostic may not be needed.

3. The design should be updated based on reviews and comments provided by the diagnostic team during the diagnostic meeting. Additional meetings may be required to discuss and resolve outstanding items.
4. Complete the Commission GO 88-B project authorization request form. The form must be signed by an official from a roadway authority, rail organization, or a public agency administering the project. The Commission GO 88-B project authorization request cannot be signed by a consultant on behalf of an agency.
5. Obtain written concurrence (evidence of agreement) of all parties for the crossing.

6. Submit completed form, attachments, and evidence of agreement signed by all parties to RCEB. Submittals shall be in PDF format. PDF/A format is preferred.

The completed Commission GO 88-B project authorization request shall be sent to the following:

- 1) RCEB Utilities Engineer (see territory assignment map in the web link provided in Section II.1 above)
- 2) RCEB Senior Utilities Engineer (Supervisor) of the RCEB Utilities Engineer (see territory assignment map in the web link provided in Section II.1 above)
- 3) RCEB Program and Project Supervisor (see territory assignment map in the web link provided in Section II.1 above)
- 4) All parties (Railroad or Roadway agency)

III. COMMISSION GO 88-B PROJECT AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FILL-IN FORM

Once design is complete, and where the crossing alterations are agreed by all of the parties, complete the Commission GO 88-B project authorization request fill-in form as follows:

1. **Date of Request:** *Insert date upon official submission for authority to alter a highway-rail crossing.*
2. **Estimated Construction Start/Completion:** *Provide estimated construction start and completion date.*
3. **Applicant Info:** *The Contact Person should be the agency representative having the authority to make the request.*
4. **Crossing Proposed to be Altered:**
 - a. Roadway Agency with Jurisdiction: *The city or county of which a crossing is located may not always fall in the jurisdiction of that local agency (e.g. Caltrans). If jurisdiction of the roadway through a crossing is shared, list both agencies.*
 - b. CPUC and U.S. DOT crossing numbers: *Can be obtained from the railroad agency or RCEB staff.*

For construction of a grade-separation that eliminates an existing at-grade highway-rail crossing, the railroad agency must provide a new U.S. DOT number for the grade-separated crossing.

- c. Vehicular Average Daily Traffic (ADT): *The roadway agency must provide the most current ADT counts for the roadway at the crossing location. The ADT counts should be within the last 5 years.*
- d. Average Daily Train Traffic and Speed: *The railroad agency must provide current train volume and maximum speed information at the crossing location for all railroads and rail transit agencies operating on the rail corridor.*
 - i. *Passenger: This includes commuter railroad service or passenger railroad service, such as Amtrak.*
 - ii. *Freight: This includes freight railroad service, such as Union Pacific Railroad.*
 - iii. *Transit: This includes light rail transit service such as Los Angeles County MTA.*

5. **Describe Proposed Alterations:** *The proposed alterations to the crossing is to be described in this section. This should include a description of roadway changes through the crossing, as well as changes to warning devices, signs, signals, pavement markings, railroad circuitry or other significant aspects of the crossing to be modified. A detailed list of the key proposed alterations should be provided.*

Example:

The proposed alteration consists of widening the existing two-lane highway and signaling the adjacent roadway intersection. The alterations include the following:

- 1) Widen the roadway to include four 12-ft lanes, a 16-foot median, and two 6-ft sidewalks.
- 2) Install traffic signals at the intersection 20-ft north of crossing and pre-signals at the crossing.
 - a) The traffic signals and pre-signals will be interconnected with the rail crossing warning devices.
 - b) 15 seconds of advance preemption time will be provided.
- 3) Relocate existing curb-mounted Commission Standard 9 warning devices on the approaches.
 - a) Replace existing gate arm with a longer gate arm.
 - b) Install additional pair of flashers on the Commission Standard 9 warning device on the NW quadrant and aim at WB left turn lane.

- 4) Install median-mounted Commission Standard 9 warning devices on the approaches.
Install additional pair of flashers on Commission Standard 9 on the north median and aim at EB right turn lane.
- 5) Install four new “DO NOT STOP ON TRACKS” (MUTCD R8-8) signs.
- 6) Maintain or reinstall existing pavement markings and signage as shown in the plans.

6. Temporary reduced vertical clearance needed and why: *If temporary reduced clearances, below the minimums specified in Commission GO 26-D, are needed during construction, then the applicant must request for a variance as part of the Commission GO 88-B request in this section. **The concurrence letter from the owning and/or maintaining railroad (as required by part 12 of the Commission GO 88-B request form) MUST acknowledge the temporary impaired clearance and agree to it in their concurrence correspondence (evidence of agreement).***

Under [Resolution SX-76](#), granted by the Commission, a variance allowing for a temporary impaired clearance may be granted through the Commission GO 88-B approval process. [Commission GO26-D](#) specifies the minimum vertical clearances (22 feet 6 inches if roadway is over the railroad, and 15 feet if the railroad is over the roadway) and horizontal clearances (8.5 feet from centerline of tangent track and 9.5 feet from centerline for tracks on a curve).

During construction, the applicant must notify the railroad and the Commission’s [Rail Operations Safety Branch](#) and RCEB in advance of creating the impaired clearance, and subsequently the railroad must notify its operating employees.

7. Describe the public benefits to be achieved by the proposed alterations:
Provide a statement on the public benefits of the proposed alterations.

Example:

The public will benefit from the proposed project through improvements to both public safety and convenience. Traffic congestion and associated vehicle queues across the track will be reduced through the addition of one lane in each direction. The installation of medians is intended to reduce the possibility of motorists driving around the lowered gate arms of the Commission Standard 9 warning device. The installation of roadway intersection traffic signals and pre-signals with railroad preemption will prevent queuing on the crossing and efficiently clear the tracks as a train approaches.

8. Explain why a separation of grades is not practicable: *Provide a statement to as why it is not practicable to grade separate the existing at-grade crossing. Please note that practicability is not solely a function of cost.*

Example:

Due to existing buildings and other facilities located in the immediate vicinity of the crossing, it would be physically impracticable to construct a grade-separated crossing.

9. Describe Commission Standard Warning Devices: *Provide existing and final configuration of the Commission Standard Warning Devices for the crossing.*

Example:

Existing Configuration:	1) Two curb-mounted Commission Standard 9, one for each approach
Final Configuration:	1) Two curb-mounted Commission Standard 9, one for each approach a. Additional pair of flashers on Commission Standard 9 in the NW quadrant aimed at WB left turn lane 2) Two median-mounted Commission Standard 9, one for each approach a. Additional pair of flashers on Commission Standard 9 on the north median aimed at EB right turn lane

10. Temporary Traffic Controls and Configuration of Commission Standard Warning Devices During Construction: *Include a statement of temporary traffic controls to be provided during construction in compliance with Section 8A.05 Temporary Traffic Control Zones, of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, (CA MUTCD). State whether the existing Commission Standard Warning Devices will be maintained during the duration of construction or if a temporary configuration is required. If the latter, please describe the temporary configuration.*

Example:

During construction, temporary traffic control, including temporary crossing closures and detours will be provided in accordance with the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, Section 8A.05 and Figure 6H-46.

During Phase 2 of construction, due to shift in lanes of the roadway, the following temporary adjustments are needed to the Commission standard warning devices:

- a) Gate arm of the curb-mounted Commission Standard 9 warning device on the SE quadrant of the crossing will need to be replaced with a longer arm
- b) Gate arm of the curb-mounted Commission Standard 9 warning device on the NW quadrant of the crossing will need to be replaced with a shorter arm

Upon completion of the project, the lane configuration and the gate arms will be restored to their existing conditions.

11. **Signature:** *This form must be signed by an official from a roadway authority, rail organization, or a public agency administering the project. It cannot be signed by a consultant on behalf of a government or railroad agency.*
12. **Evidence of Agreement:** *Written concurrence must be obtained from each party, including each rail agency responsible for maintaining the crossing warning devices and/or owning the rail right-of-way (see exception below) and the public agency responsible for the roadway, depending on who is submitting the request for authorization.*

For the purposes of the General Order 88-B applications, Evidence of Agreement is only required from the agencies that operate and maintain the facilities affected by the proposed alterations. Owners of the right-of-ways (ROW) where the facilities are located do not need to sign the Evidence of Agreement, if they themselves do not operate and maintain those facilities. However, an agreement between the ROW owner and stakeholder may stipulate that the ROW owner will be required to a party to the application. Please check with the ROW owner on if they will require the Evidence of Agreement to be signed by them as well.

If agreement of the parties involved cannot be obtained, then a Formal Application must be filed with the Commission's Docket Office to gain Commission approval for the proposed alterations.

13. **Attachments:** *A checklist has been provided for applicants to use to mark the attachments that are being provided with the Commission GO 88-B project authorization request. Additional attachments provided shall be listed in the blank fields.*
14. **Other Interested Parties:** *Provide names and e-mail addresses for those that wish to receive electronic notifications regarding this application. Evidence of Agreement is NOT required for other interested parties.*