



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

400 Seventh St., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

January 8, 1990

Refer to: HNG-14/SS-17

Mr. Arthur M. Dinitz  
President  
Transpo Industries, Inc.  
20 Jones Street  
New Rochelle, New York 10801-6024

Dear Mr. Dinitz:

This is in response to your October 13 letter to Mr. Thomas O. Willett requesting acceptance of your company's Break-Safe breakaway sign support system for use on Federal-aid highway projects. Transmitted with your letter was the Southwest Research Institute report (dated September 1989) of the pendulum tests you had performed, and drawings of the Type A and Type B systems. Additional information including drawings, were submitted with your December 13, 1989, letter.

The tests were conducted to assess the compliance of the Break-Safe frangible couplings with the breakaway requirements of the 1985 American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Standard Specifications for Structural Supports for Highway Signs, Luminaires and Traffic Signals. These specifications have been adopted, with minor modifications by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Testing was conducted using a 1,800 pound instrumented pendulum with a 10 stage crushable nose. The speed of the pendulum at impact was 20 m.p.h. (29.3 fps) in each case. The tests and their results are summarized below. All impacts are head on except as noted for test TP-7.

Test No.	Test Article Description	Total Weight (lbs)	20 mph Test Velocity Change (fps)	60 mph Calc Velocity Change (fps)	Stub Height (in)
TP-4	B-525 Coupling, W8x18 Post	297	4.1	4.9	0.3
TP-5	B-650 Coupling, W12x35 Post	595	5.7	10.7	0.3
TP-6	AI6 Coupling, W6x9 Post	98	1.6	4.1	0.3
TP-7	B-525 Coupling, W8x18 Post (45 degree hit)	297	2.8	4.4	0.3

TP-8	AUX8 Coupling, Back to Back Franklin Steel, 4 pounds per foot U-post in “strong” soil	110	2.3	2.4	4.0
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These results meet the change in velocity and stub height requirements adopted by the AASHTO and the FHWA. Therefore, except as limited below, your company’s Break-Safe Type A and Type B couplings are acceptable for use on Federal-aid highway projects, if proposed by a State. We note the AUX system using back to back U-posts was only tested in the strong (National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) designation S-1) soil described in the NCHRP Report 230. Embedding the stub in “weak” (S-2) soil may allow the post and stub to rotate under impact, loading the couplings in a way that they do not readily fracture. Therefore, testing in “weak” soil is recommended to fully qualify the AUX Brake-Safe systems. Until the direct burial Type AUX systems are qualified in the S-2 soil, our acceptance is only extended for their use in “strong” soils.

Additionally, we note that all the tests were run on single support installations with ballast attached to the upper portion of the support, but with no sign blank or upper hinge present. This is an unconventional and questionable test procedure. If the occupant risk test results were not so low we would request that tests be run on multiple support installations before accepting the use of the subject couplings in such installations. Your request that acceptance be granted for “any size or weight per foot provided the mass of the post under hinge mechanism is 600 pounds or less.” Since upper hinge/slip plate mechanisms were not involved in your tests, we are unable to confirm that such a mass would yield acceptable results. However, we believe that for installations where supports are further than 7 feet apart, posts up to 45 pounds per foot will perform satisfactorily (we have applied the same size limitation to slip-base sign supports). For dual support installations (where both the posts lie within a 7-foot path), we limit our acceptance to situations where the total weight of both posts below the hinges is 45 pounds per foot. The couplings should not be used in sign structures with three supports or more if posts are closer than 7 feet apart without further testing.

Our acceptance is limited to the breakaway characteristics of the systems and does not cover their structural features. Presumably, you will supply potential users with sufficient information on structural design and installation requirements to ensure proper performance. We anticipate that the States will require certification from Transpo Industries that the hardware furnished has essentially the same chemistry, mechanical properties, and geometry as those used in the tests, and that they will meet the FHWA breakaway requirements.

Since the Break-Safe couplings are proprietary items, to be used in a Federal-aid highway project they: (a) must be supplied through competitive bidding with equally suitable unpatented items; (b) the State highway agency must certify that they are essential for synchronization with existing highway facilities or that no equally suitable alternate 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, a copy of which is enclosed.

Sincerely yours,

L. A. Staron, Chief  
Federal-Aid and Design Division

Enclosures

**GENERAL NOTES**

Meets all AASHTO Standard specifications for structural supports for highway signs, luminaires and traffic signals.

All ASTM A325 bolts must be within a hardness range of Rockwell C23 to C31 prior to hot dip galvanizing per ASTM A153 or mechanically galvanized per ASTM B-454-76.

Fasteners, except for special bolt and coupling, are installed with lockwashers or locknuts and do not have specific torque requirements. Fasteners should be made as tight as possible with conventional wrenches.

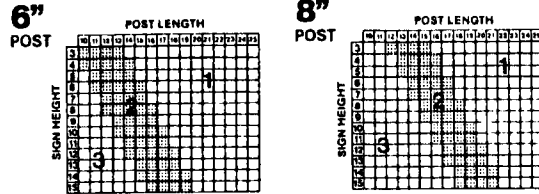
Square and level individual components to minimize need for shimming.

No more than two shims underneath any one coupling and no more than three shims underneath any two couplings.

Structural steel to be hot dip galvanized per ASTM A123 after fabrication.

All brackets to be permanently labeled with the appropriate bracket type and bracket selection number.

Select correct bracket number by locating the intersection of sign height and post length in the bracket selection matrix. The intersection will be either Zone 1, 2 or 3 which corresponds to bracket numbers 1, 2 or 3.



**BRACKET TABLES**

**INSTALLATION NOTES**

Wrench sizes required: 9/16", 7/8", 1-1/8", 1-1/4", 1-7/8", 1-5/8"

**ANCHOR ASSEMBLY**

Check hole alignment of retrofit plate and slipbase.

(Item 3)

The retrofit plate may be leveled by introducing shims between the retrofit plate and the slipbase.

(Items 10 and 11)

Install bolts, washers and nuts as tight as possible to permanently clamp retrofit plate to slipbase slab.

(Items 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14)

**BRACKET & HINGE ASSEMBLY**

Attach brackets to post using bolts and cap screws provided. Square and tighten.

(Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6)

Attach hinge plates to post using bolts provided. Square and tighten.

(Items 7, 8 and 9)

**COUPLING ASSEMBLY**

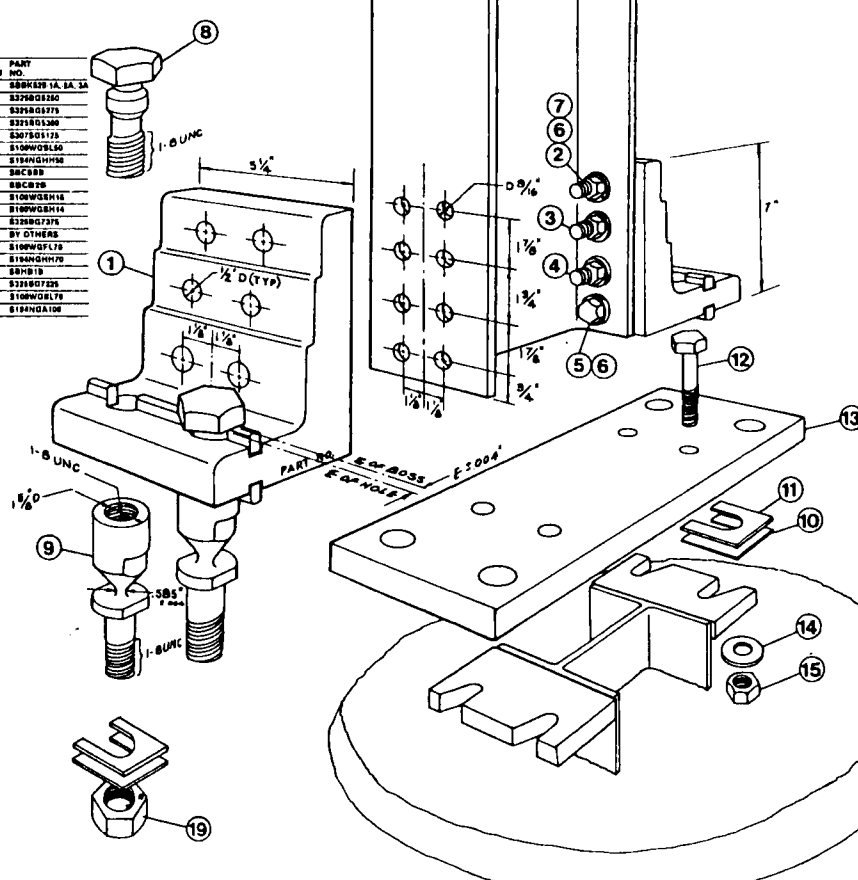
Suspend post over anchor section. Insert special bolt through bracket and into coupling. Hand tighten. (Items 1 and 2) Lower post with couplings onto anchor section - guiding lower portion of couplings through holes provided. (Items 1 and 2) Install locknut onto threaded portion of coupling protruding through anchor section. Hand tighten. (Items 1 and 2) If post is not plumb insert shims between anchor section and coupling flange. Tighten locknut - then tighten special bolt.

(Items 1, 2, 3 and 4)

**NOTE:** Do not place torque across necked down portion of coupling. Wrench flats are provided on either side for proper tightening.

**BILL OF MATERIALS**

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	QTY	PART NO.
1	Bracket	2	SBM525 (A, B, C)
2	Post	1	See Note 1
3	Bolt	4	S325A0320
4	Cap Screw	4	S325A0320
5	Cap Screw	4	S325A0320
6	Lockwasher	10	S100W04170
7	Hinge	12	S100H04170
8	Special Bolt	4	SBC68B
9	Coupling	4	SBC68C
10	Shim	4	S100S04170
11	Shim	4	S100S04170
12	Plate	4	S100P04170
13	Washer	4	S100W04170
14	Washer	4	S100W04170
15	Washer	4	S100W04170
16	Washer	4	S100W04170
17	Washer	4	S100W04170
18	Washer	4	S100W04170
19	Washer	4	S100W04170



ASSEMBLY NO. SBM525-4-5-6  
 DATE 6-24-87  
**base and hinge assembly**  
**type B-525 (S/B)**  
**for 6" & 8" WF Sign Posts**  
**TRAMP**  
**Break-away SYSTEM FOR GROUND MOUNTED SIGN SUPPORTS**

**GENERAL NOTES**

Meets all AASHTO "Standard specifications for structural supports for highway signs, luminaires and traffic signals."

All ASTM A325 bolts must be within a hardness range of Rockwell C23 to C31 prior to dip galvanizing per ASTM A153 or mechanically galvanized per ASTM A78.

Fasteners, except for special bolt and coupling, are installed with lockwashers or nuts and do not have specific torque requirements. Fasteners should be made as tight as possible with conventional wrenches.

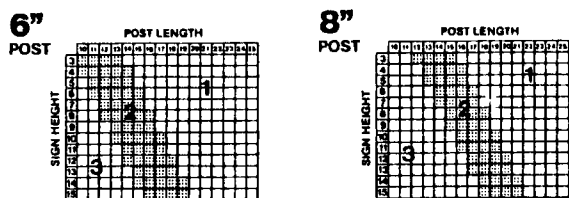
Square and level individual components to minimize need for shimming.

Use no more than two shims underneath any one coupling and no more than three shims underneath any two couplings.

Structural steel to be hot dip galvanized per ASTM A123 after fabrication.

All brackets to be permanently labeled with the appropriate bracket type and bracket selection number.

Select correct bracket number by locating the intersection of sign height and post length in the bracket selection matrix. The intersection will be either Zone 1, 2 or 3 which corresponds to bracket numbers 1, 2 or 3.



**BRACKET TABLES**

**INSTALLATION NOTES**

Wrench sizes required: 9/16", 7/8", 1-1/16", 1-1/4", 1-7/16", 1-5/8"

**BRACKET ASSEMBLY**

Assemble brackets to post with bolts provided. Square and tighten. (Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7)

**ANCHOR ASSEMBLY**

Assemble coupling anchors (8) to installation template (not shown).

Lower entire anchor assembly into fresh concrete and vibrate into position so that the tops of the individual anchors (8) are flush with the finished top surface of the footings.

**COUPLING ASSEMBLY**

Suspend post over footing and insert special bolts (9) through brackets (1).

Below bracket, thread couplings (10) into anchors (8) but leave loose.

Insert post with special bolts (9) onto loose couplings (10) and thread special bolts into couplings. Thread couplings all the way into anchors (8).

Tighten special bolts (9) with 1-5/8" wrench. NOTE! Do not place torque across necked down portion of coupling — wrench flats are provided on either side for proper tightening.

If post is not plumb, insert shims (11) and (12) between couplings (10) and anchors (8).

**HINGE ASSEMBLY**

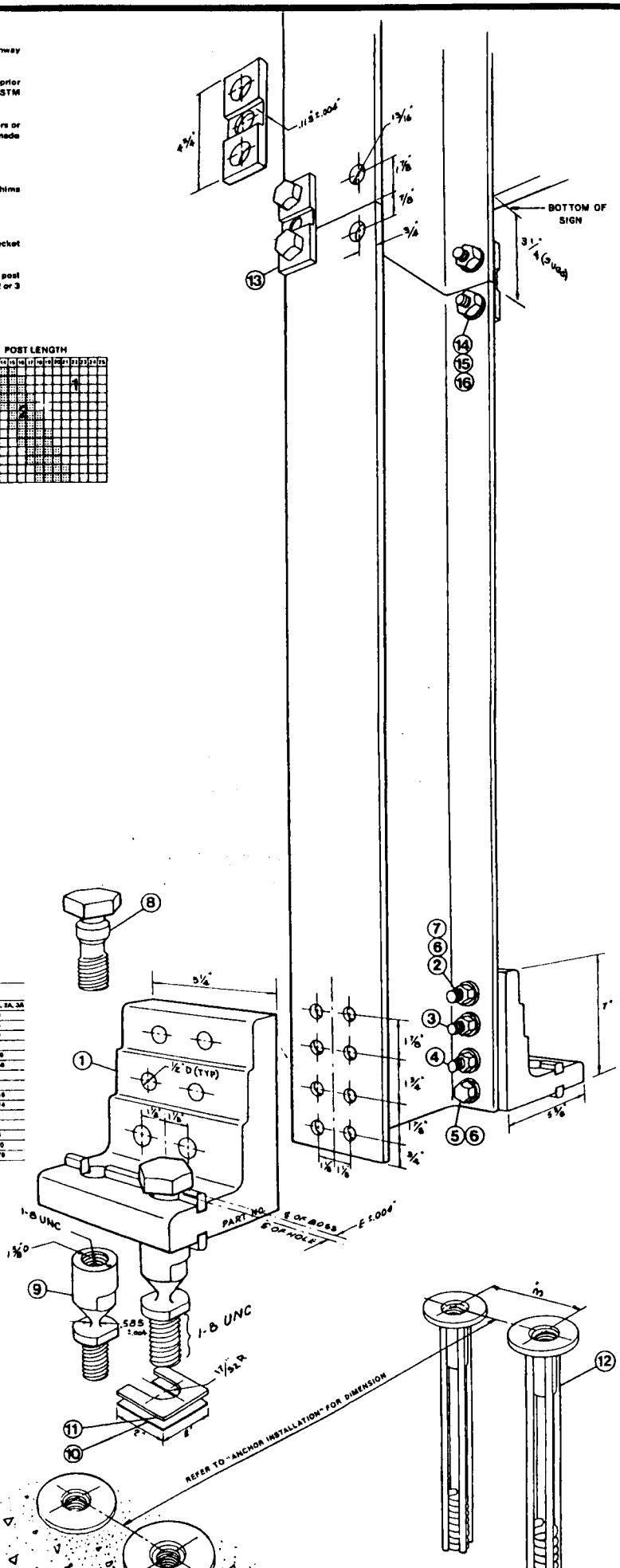
Butt upper and lower posts together on flat surface.

Place hinge plates (13) on outer flanges and secure with 3/4-UNC bolts (14) and (15) — snug but do not tighten.

Make sure upper and lower posts are in alignment; then tighten all nuts (16) to proof load — 1/2 of a turn beyond snug.

**BILL OF MATERIALS**

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	QTY	PART NO.
1	Bracket	2	SBRK522-1A, SA, 3A
2	Bolt	4	S235BG1250
3	Bolt	4	S235BG1275
4	Bolt	4	S235BG1300
5	Cap Screw	4	S3075G1195
6	Lockwasher	10	S100WG1450
7	Nut	12	S104NGH156
8	Special Bolt	4	S235BG15675
9	Coupling	2	S100WB10
10	Shim	2	S100WG1410
11	Shim	2	S100WG1414
12	Anchor	4	S545P
13	Hinge Plate	4	S104NGH153
14	Bolt	8	S235BG1225
15	Lockwasher	8	S100WG1470
16	Nut	8	S104NGH170



TRANSPO  
**break-safe™**  
**BREAKAWAY SYSTEM FOR GROUND MOUNTED SIGN SUPPORTS**  
 base and hinge assembly  
**type B-525-1-P**  
 for 6" and 8" W.F. Sig  
 ASSEMBLY NO. SBM525-1, 2, 3 0A1 14-87

SS-17

**GENERAL NOTES**

Meets all AASHTO "Standard specifications for structural supports for highway signs, luminaires and traffic signals."

All ASTM A325 bolts must be within a hardness range of Rockwell C23 to C31 prior to hot dip galvanizing per ASTM A153 or mechanically galvanized per ASTM B-454-76.

Fasteners, except for special bolt and coupling, are installed with lockwashers or locknuts and do not have specific torque requirements. Fasteners should be made as tight as possible with conventional wrenches.

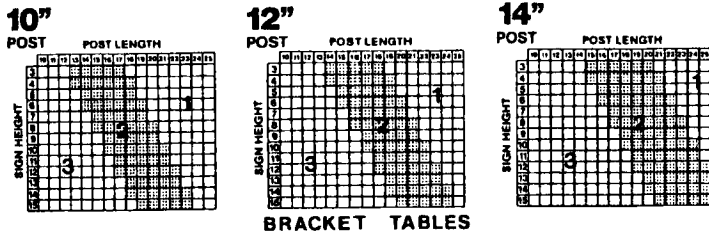
Square and level individual components to minimize need for shimming.

No more than two shims underneath any one coupling and no more than three shims underneath any two couplings.

Structural steel to be hot dip galvanized per ASTM A123 after fabrication.

All brackets to be permanently labeled with the appropriate bracket type and bracket selection number.

Select correct bracket number by locating the intersection of sign height and post length in the bracket selection matrix. The intersection will be either Zone 1, 2 or 3 which corresponds to bracket numbers 1, 2 or 3.



**BRACKET TABLES**

**INSTALLATION NOTES**

Wrench sizes required: 9/16", 7/8", 1-1/16", 1-1/4", 1-7/16", 1-5/8"

**ANCHOR ASSEMBLY**

Check hole alignment of retrofit plate and slipbase.

(Item 13)

The retrofit plate may be leveled by introducing shims between the retrofit plate and the slipbase.

(Items 10 and 11)

Install bolts, washers and nuts as tight as possible to permanently clamp retrofit plate to slipbase stub.

(Items 12, 14, 15, 16 and 17)

**BRACKET & HINGE ASSEMBLY**

Attach brackets to post using bolts and cap screws provided. Square and tighten.

(Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7)

Attach hinge plates to post using bolts provided. Square and tighten.

(Items 8, 9 and 19)

**COUPLING ASSEMBLY**

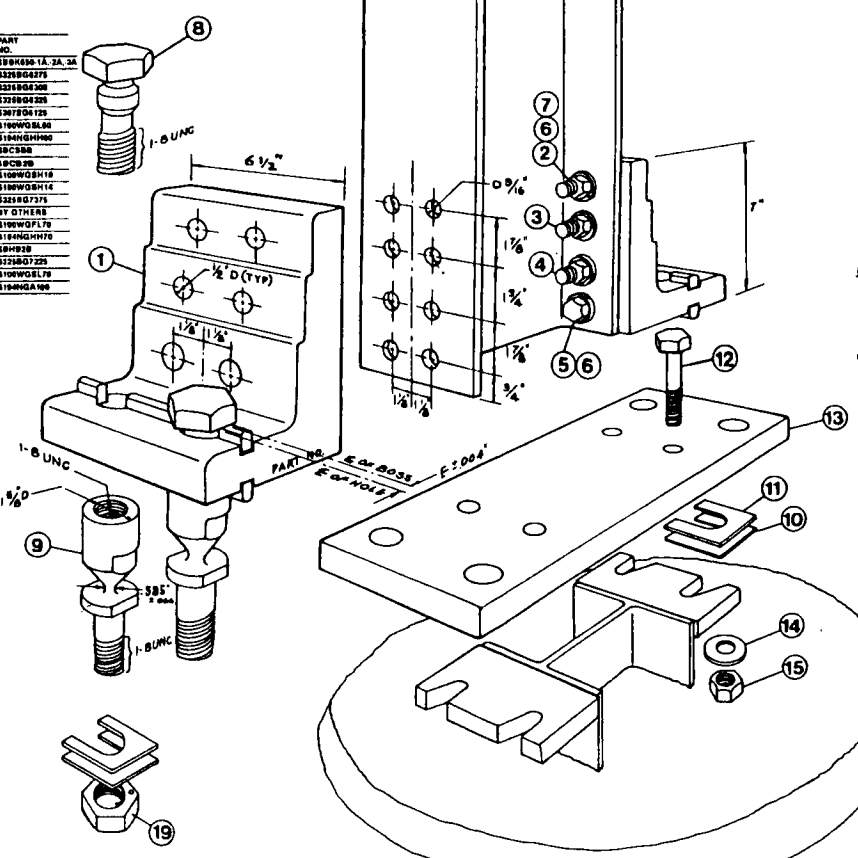
Suspend post over anchor section. Insert special bolt through bracket and into coupling. Hand tighten. (Items 1 and 9) Lower post with couplings onto anchor section — guiding lower portion of couplings through holes provided. (Items 1 and 13) Install locknut onto threaded portion of coupling protruding through anchor section. Hand tighten. (Items 1 and 13) If post is not plumb insert shims between anchor section and coupling flange. Tighten locknut — then tighten special bolt.

(Items 1, 13, 18 and 19)

NOTE: Do not place torque across necked down portion of coupling. Wrench flats are provided on either side for proper tightening.

**BILL OF MATERIALS**

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	QTY	PART NO.
1	Bracket 0861 18 Alum. (See Bracket Selection Table)	2	08610861-1A, 2A, 3A
2	Bolt Top, 3/8-11 UNC x 2 3/4", Hex. Hd., ASTM A325, Galv. ASTM A153	4	0325042375
3	Bolt Middle, 3/8-11 UNC x 3 1/2", Hex. Hd., ASTM A325, Galv. ASTM A153	4	0325043100
4	Bolt Bottom, 3/8-11 UNC x 3 1/4", Hex. Hd., ASTM A325, Galv. ASTM A153	4	0325043025
5	Cap Screw Washer, 3/8-11 UNC x 1 1/2", Hex. Hd., ASTM A325, Galv. ASTM A153	4	0307041225
6	Lockwasher 3/8" Galv. Steel	16	0100040600
7	Nut Hex. 3/8-11 UNC, ASTM A194 GR 2-H, Galv. ASTM A153	12	0104040600
8	Special Bolt 1-8 UNC, ASTM A325, Galv. ASTM B-464-79	4	030304
9	Coupling Large, 1-8 UNC, 2A & 3B, Galv. ASTM B-464-79	4	030304
10	Shim Hardwood, 1/8" Gauge, Galv. Steel Sheet	4	0100040610
11	Shim Hardwood, 1/4" Gauge, Galv. Steel Sheet	4	0100040614
12	Bolt Plate 3/8-10 UNC x 3 3/4", Hex. Hd., ASTM A325, Galv. ASTM A153	4	0325043375
13	Retrofit Plate 1 1/2" Thick, 0861 18 Alum. or A6061 Alod. 1" BY OTHERS	1	BY OTHERS
14	Flat Washer 3/8" Galv. Steel	4	0100040610
15	Nut Hex. 3/8-11 UNC, ASTM A194, Galv. ASTM A153	12	0104040600
16	Hinge Plate Large, 1 1/2" Section, Galv. ASTM A153	4	030904
17	Bolt Hinge, 3/8-10 UNC x 2 1/4", Hex. Hd., ASTM A325, Galv. ASTM A153	8	0325043225
18	Lockwasher 3/8" Galv. Steel	4	0100040610
19	Locknut ANCO, 1-8 UNC, ASTM A325, Galv. ASTM A153	4	0104041000



TRANSPO  
**"break-safe"**  
**BREAKAWAY SYSTEM FOR**  
**GROUND MOUNTED**  
**SIGN SUPPORTS**  
 base and hinge assembly  
**type B-650 (S/B)**  
 for 10", 12" & 14" WF Sign Posts  
 ASSEMBLY NO. SBM650-4,-5,-6 DATE 6-12-87



55-17

**GENERAL NOTES**

Meets all AASHTO "Standard specifications for structural supports for highway signs, luminaires and traffic signals."

Fasteners are installed with lockwashers or locknuts and do not have specific torque requirements. Fasteners should be made as tight as possible with conventional wrenches.

Square and level individual components to minimize need for shimming.

Structural steel to be hot dip galvanized per ASTM A123 after fabrication.

**INSTALLATION NOTES**

Wrench sizes required: 7/8", 1", 1-1/16"

**BRACKET ASSEMBLY**

Assemble brackets to post with bolts provided. Square and tighten. (Items ①, ②, ③ and ④)

**ANCHOR ASSEMBLY**

Assemble coupling anchors ⑩ to installation template (not shown).

Lower entire anchor assembly into fresh concrete and vibrate into position so that the top of the individual anchors ⑩ are flush with the finished top surface of the footings.

**COUPLING ASSEMBLY**

Suspend post over footing and insert special bolts ⑥ through brackets ①.

Below bracket, thread couplings ⑧ into anchors ⑩ but leave loose.

Lower post with special bolts ⑥ onto loose couplings ⑧ and thread special bolts into couplings. Thread couplings all the way into anchors ⑩.

Tighten special bolts ⑥ with 1-5/8" wrench. NOTE! Do not place torque across necked down portion of coupling — wrench flats are provided on either side for proper tightening.

If post is not plumb, insert shims ⑦ and ⑧ between couplings ⑧ and anchors ⑩.

**HINGE ASSEMBLY**

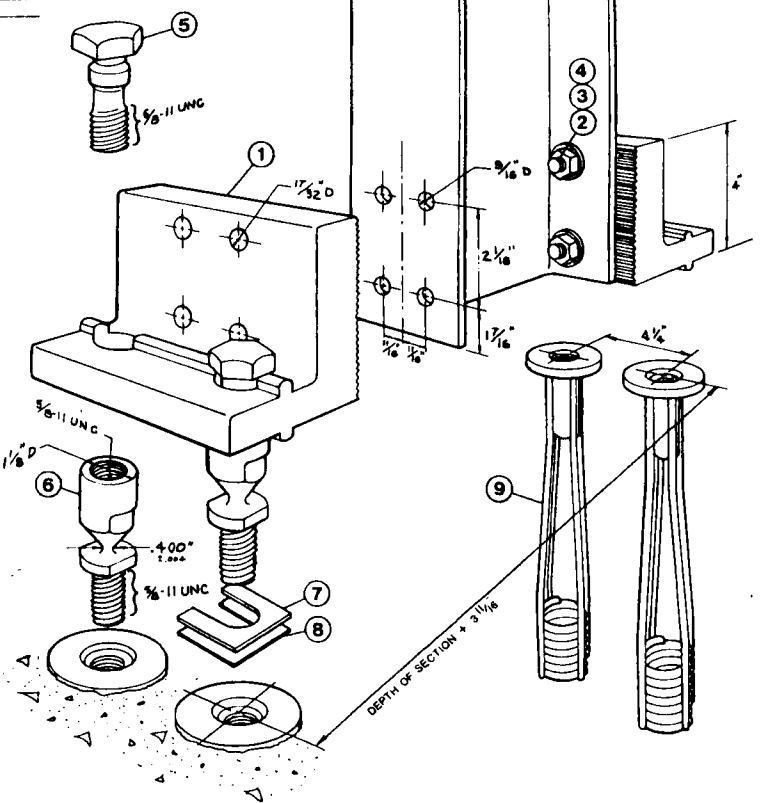
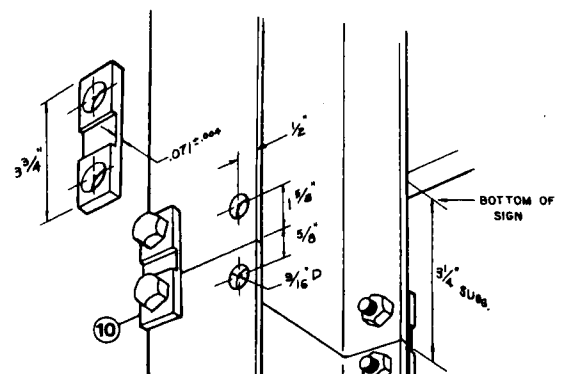
Butt upper and lower posts together on flat surface.

Place hinge plates ⑨ on outer flanges and secure with 1/2-UNC x 1-1/2" bolts ③ and ④ — snug but do not tighten.

Make sure upper and lower posts are in alignment; then tighten all nuts ⑤ to proof load — 1/2 of a turn beyond snug.

**BILL OF MATERIALS**

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	QTY	PART NO.
①	Bracket	2	SBAK9117
②	Bolt	6	SBB04022
③	Lockwasher	12	SBB04022
④	Washer	12	SBB04022
⑤	Nut	12	SBB04022
⑥	Special Bolt	4	SBC0414
⑦	Coupling	4	SBC0414
⑧	Shim	2	SBB04022
⑨	Shim	2	SBB04022
⑩	Anchor	4	SBA0410
⑪	Hinge Plate	4	SBA0410
⑫	Bolt	6	SBB04022



ASSEMBLY NO. SBMA16  
DATE 4-2-87

base and hinge assembly  
type **A16-LP**  
for 6WF 9 section (max.)

**TRAFEG**  
"break-safe"  
BREAKAWAY SYSTEM FOR  
GROUND MOUNTED  
SIGN SUPPORTS



55-17

**GENERAL NOTES**

Meets all AASHTO Standard specifications for structural supports for highway signs, luminaires and traffic signals.

All ASTM A325 bolts must be within a hardness range of Rockwell C25 to C31 prior to hot dip galvanizing per ASTM A153 or mechanically galvanized per ASTM B-454-76.

Fasteners, except for special bolt and coupling, are installed with lockwashers or locknuts and do not have specific torque requirements. Fasteners should be made as tight as possible with conventional wrenches.

Square and level individual components to minimize need for shimming.

No more than two shims underneath any one coupling and no more than three shims underneath any two couplings.

Structural steel to be hot dip galvanized per ASTM A123 after fabrication.

**INSTALLATION NOTES**

Wrench sizes required: 7/8", 1", 1-1/16"

**ANCHOR BRACKET ASSEMBLY**

Attach adapters (1) and (2) to post, tighten bolts (11), (12) and (13) to proof load (1/2 turn beyond snug).

Mount anchor brackets (16) onto adapters (1) and (2). Tighten bolts (2), (3) and (4) to proof load.

**EARTH EMBEDMENT OF ANCHOR SECTION**

Drive the anchor assembly into the ground with a special drive cap, and a hydraulic, pneumatic or gasoline engine powered driver. The anchor assembly may also be placed in an augured hole with either concrete, or with a stone and grout mix.

**UPPER BRACKET ASSEMBLY**

Attach adapters (1) to post, tighten bolts (11), (12) and (13) to proof load. Mount upper brackets (1) onto adapters (1). Tighten bolts (2), (3) and (4) to proof load.

**COUPLING ASSEMBLY**

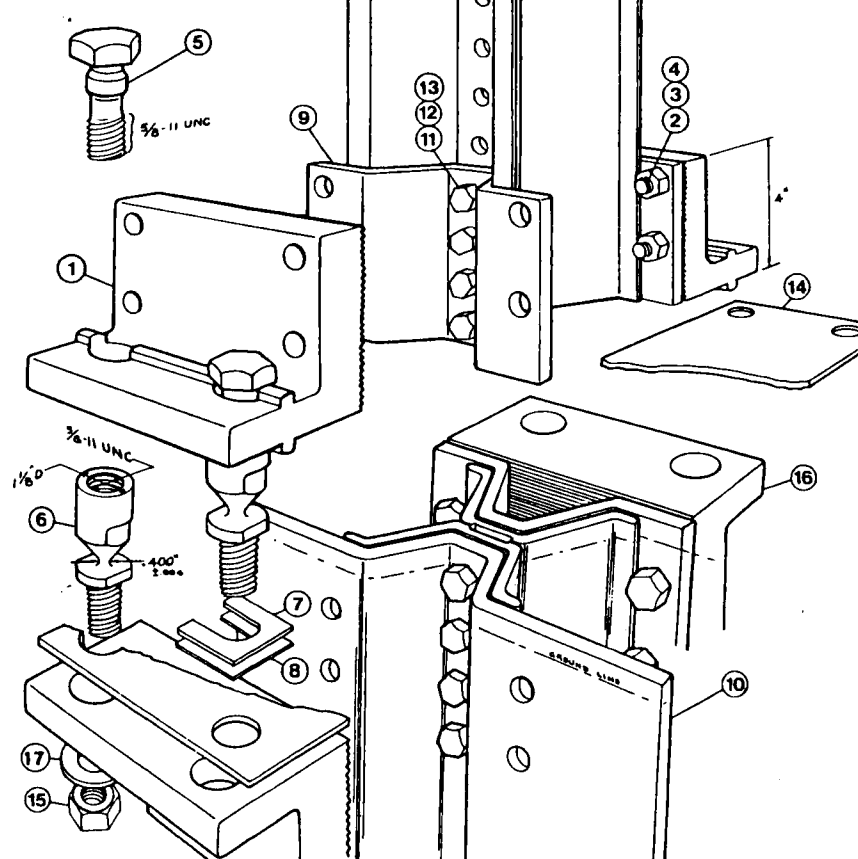
Place pop-plats (14) onto imbedded anchor section, insert frangible couplings (1) through pop-plate and anchor brackets. Tighten hex nut (6) to proof load.

Suspend post over anchor section, lining up the brackets (1) with the frangible couplings. Insert special bolts (11) through the brackets and into the frangible couplings. Tighten couplings and special bolts. Insert shims (7) and (8) between couplings and pop-plats if necessary.

Note: Do not place torque across necked down section of frangible couplings. Wrench flats are provided on either side for proper tightening.

**BILL OF MATERIALS**

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	QTY	PART NO.
1	Upper Bracket	2	BRACK111
2	Bolt	16	13218C111
3	Lockwasher	16	110W03130
4	Nut	4	110N03130
5	Special Bolt	4	BRCA38
6	Frangible Coupling	4	BRCA38
7	Shim	2	110W03130
8	Shim	2	110W03130
9	Adapter	2	BRAD11A 3/8-16-16
10	Adapter	2	BRAD11B 3/8-16-16
11	Bolt	1	13218C111
12	Bolt	1	13218C111
13	Lockwasher	2	110W03130
14	Pop-Plate	1	BRADP1
15	Nut	4	110N03130
16	Anchor Bracket	2	BRACK112
17	Flat Washer	4	110W03130



**TRANEZ**  
**"break-away"**  
**BREAKAWAY SYSTEM FOR**  
**GROUND MOUNTED**  
**SIGN SUPPORTS**  
 Earth  
 Embedded  
**type AUX4, AUX6, AUX8**  
 for 4", 6" and 8" back to back U channel post  
 ASSEMBLY NO. SBMAUX4, 6, 8  
 DATE 3-13-87