

Traffic Sign Maintenance/Management Handbook

Traffic sign maintenance and management has recently become an urgent issue for local agencies. In 2008 the Federal and Minnesota Manuals on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) added new requirements for sign retroreflectivity that includes deadlines for establishing a sign maintenance program and updating signs to meet minimum retroreflectivity levels. The first deadline (A list of all three retroreflectivity compliance dates and requirements are provided on page A-7 of the guide) requires all local agencies (small cities and townships included) to establish a traffic sign maintenance program by January 2012.

In the past year, the federal sign retroreflectivity requirements have been challenged by local agencies and the FHWA is currently reviewing the requirements and deadlines. A ruling on the issue is expected the summer of 2012. There is no guarantee that the requirements will change, therefore MnDOT is recommending that agencies move forward with plans to meet the current requirements. In addition, there are no federal process to verify that agencies are in compliance with the sign requirements however, if an agency does not have a documented process in place, they are at risk of being liable if a crash occurs due to non compliance.

Do you have your program in place? If not, the [Traffic Sign Maintenance/Management Handbook](#) is for you. It steps you through the various approved maintenance and management methods and helps you determine which method is best for your agency.

Once you determine how you are going to maintain your signs, it is suggested that you complete an inventory. Section E of the [handbook](#) summarizes different ways of conducting sign inventories, engineering studies and reviews the various types of signs (regulatory, warning and guide) and which signs are required. You may be surprised to see how few signs are actually required based on the MNMUTCD. For example, did you know that "STOP" signs are not required? Its true! See page E-18 of the [handbook](#) for more details.

Have you ever wondered how effective certain traffic signs are? Do DEER CROSSING signs reduce crashes or change driver behavior? Section F of the [handbook](#) will help you understand the various studies that have been conducted on sign effectiveness and those signs that have been proven to be effective and ineffective. When you are evaluating your system to determine how to best replace the signs in your agency to meet the minimum retroreflectivity levels, it is recommended that you consider sign removal as well. If a sign has been proven to be ineffective, why would you keep it in place and continue to maintain it? In an economy where budgets are continually being cut, sign removal can help reduce long term maintenance costs. Section F of the [handbook](#) discussed which signs are candidates for removal and provides a number of example situations in which sign removal can be applied.

MINNESOTA'S BEST PRACTICES FOR
**Traffic Sign Maintenance/
Management Handbook**

Including Insight on How to Remove Unnecessary and Ineffective Signage

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