

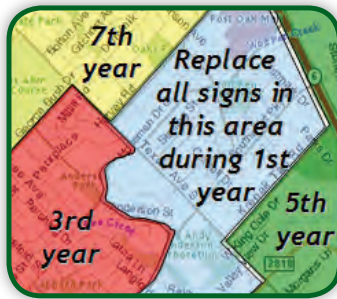
MINNESOTA'S BEST PRACTICES FOR Traffic Sign Maintenance/ Management Handbook

Including Insight on How to Remove Unnecessary and Ineffective Signage

REPORT NO. 2014RIC20
VERSION 2.0

October 2014

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- The information in this Best Practices guide is provided to assist agencies in their effort to better maintain the traffic signs on their system of roads and highways.
 - This Best Practices Guide does **not** set requirements or mandates.
 - This Best Practices Guide is **not** a best practice document for design or operations.
 - This Best Practices Guide contains **no** warrants or standards and does **not** supersede other publications that do.
 - This Best Practices Guide is a resource document and is intended to help transportation professionals develop a technically sound set of policies and practices to better maintain their system of traffic signs.
 - This Best Practices Guide is **not** a standard and is neither intended to be, nor does it establish, a legal standard of care for users or professionals.
 - This Best Practices Guide does not supersede publications such as the USDOT FHWA's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD); Association of American State Highway Transportation Officials' (AASHTO) "Green Book" titled *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*; or other AASHTO and agency guidelines, manuals and policies.
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Part A - Background

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Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices – Background



www.dot.state.mn.us/trafficeng/publ/mutcd/index.html

- 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 655.603 adopts the MUTCD as the national standard for any street, highway or bicycle trail open to the public.
- Section 15 of the Uniform Vehicle Code adopts the MUTCD as the standard of the conformance of signs, signals, markings and other devices intended to regulate, warn or guide traffic.
- The Commissioner of Transportation has adopted the MN MUTCD for all public roadways [and private roadways open to the public] in Minnesota (Commissioner Order No. 92452 – December 15, 2011).
- MS 169.06 empowers the Commissioner and local road authorities to place and maintain traffic control devices on roadways within their jurisdiction, to regulate, warn, or guide traffic.

Yes, the MN MUTCD applies to your roads – it applies to all public roads and private roads open to the public in Minnesota

Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

2011 MINNESOTA UNIFORM TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES MANUAL ORDER NO. 92452

The Commissioner of Transportation (Commissioner) shall adopt a manual and specifications establishing a uniform system of traffic control devices for streets and highways of the State of Minnesota. Such uniform system shall correlate with and so far as possible conform to the current system as approved by the American Association of State Highway Officials and the national Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (Federal MUTCD). (Minn. Stat. § 169.06, subd. 1 (2008); Federal Highway Administration, 23 C.F.R. § 655.603 (2008).)

A multi-agency committee has reviewed the 2009 Federal MUTCD, FHWA Guidelines on Retroreflective Sheeting Identification, and the 2005 Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices as revised by Commissioner's Order No. 89453, dated January 2, 2007, 90038 dated February 15, 2008 and 90627 dated March 27, 2009 and recommended adding Appendices and revising or adding text and figures to make provisions for Minnesota Statutes and departmental procedures.


Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 169.06, subd. 1 (2008), the Commissioner hereby adopts the following as the 2011 Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

- I. Federal MUTCD, 2009 edition (dated January 15, 2010), and List of Known Errors (dated August 17, 2011).
- II. Minnesota Department of Transportation Appendices:
 - A. APPENDIX A1 - Congressional Legislation
 - B. APPENDIX A2 - Metric Conversions
 - C. APPENDIX A3 - Retroreflective Sheeting Identification Guidelines
 - C. APPENDIX B - Warrants, Standards, and Guidelines for Traffic Control Devices used at Senior Citizen and Handicapped Pedestrian Crossings
 - D. APPENDIX C - Sign Listings & Recommended Sizes
- III. State of Minnesota, Department of Transportation, additional sections, revisions, and corrections to the 2009 Federal MUTCD.

It is further ordered that the provisions of the 2011 MN MUTCD shall be implemented and applied to all traffic control devices installed on or after January 1, 2012 upon highways within the State except for those traffic control devices which conform to the 2005 edition of the MN MUTCD with its 3 revisions and are on order or under contract prior to January 1, 2012. All existing traffic control devices or installations not in conformance with standards in the 2011 MN MUTCD shall be changed to conform to the new standards herein when replacement occurs.

This Order supersedes Commissioner's Order No. 88522, dated May 5, 2005 which adopted and prescribed the 2005 Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices along with Commissioner's Order 89453 dated January 2, 2007, Commissioner's Order 90038 dated February 15, 2008, and as further revised by Commissioner's Order 90627 dated March 26, 2009.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this 15th day of December, 2011.


Thomas K. Sorel
Commissioner of Transportation

Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

Current Requirements

- Signs have always been required to be retroreflective. No minimum values had previously been required.
- Language adopted in the MN MUTCD requires all agencies that maintain roadways open to public travel to adopt a sign maintenance program designed to maintain traffic sign retroreflectivity at or above specific levels.
- All agencies responsible for maintaining traffic signs are required to comply with the new MN MUTCD requirements.
- **STANDARD** Public agencies or officials having jurisdiction **shall** use an assessment or management method that is designed to maintain sign retroreflectivity at or above the minimum levels in the MN MUTCD Table 2A-3 (page A-5).
COMPLIANCE DATE: June 13, 2014



Reminder

- In the MN MUTCD words have very specific meanings:
 1. **STANDARD** - a statement of required practice and the verb **SHALL** is used.
 2. **GUIDANCE** - a statement of recommended practice with deviations allowed based on engineering judgement. The verb **SHOULD** is used.
 3. **OPTION** - a statement of practice that is permissive. The verb **MAY** is used.



Specified Levels of Retroreflectivity

Table 2A-3: Minimum Maintained Retroreflectivity Levels

Sign Color	Sheeting Type (ASTM D4956-04)				Additional Criteria
	Beaded Sheeting			Prismatic Sheeting	
	I	II	III		
White on Green	W*: G≥7	W*: G≥15	W*: G≥25	W≥250; G≥25	Overhead
	W*: G≥7			W≥120; G≥15	Post-Mounted
Black on Yellow or Black on Orange	Y*: O*			Y≥50; O≥50	②
	Y*: O*			Y≥75; O≥75	③
White on Red				W≥35; R≥7	④
Black on White				W≥50	--

① The minimum maintained retroreflectivity levels shown in this table are in units of cd/lx/m² measured at an observation angle of 0.2° and an entrance angle of -4.0°.

② For text and fine symbol signs measuring at least 48 inches and for all sizes of bold symbol signs.

③ For text and fine symbol signs measuring less than 48 inches.

④ For text and fine symbol signs measuring less than 48 inches.

④ Minimum Sign Contrast ratio ≥ 3:1 (white retroreflectivity ÷ red retroreflectivity).

* This sheeting type shall not be used for this color for this application except as noted in 2A.8.

Bold Symbol Signs		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• W1-1, -2 -- Turn and Curve• W1-3, -4 -- Reverse Turn and Curve• W1-5 -- Winding Road• W1-6, -7 -- Large Arrow• W1-8 -- Chevron• W1-10 -- Intersection in Curve• W1-11 -- Hairpin Curve• W1-15 -- 270 Degree Loop• W2-1 -- Cross Road• W2-2, -3 -- Side Road• W2-4, -5 -- T and Y Intersection• W2-6 -- Circular Intersection• W2-7, -8 -- Double Side Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• W3-1 -- Stop ahead• W3-2 -- Yield Ahead• W3-3 -- Signal Ahead• W4-1 -- Merge• W4-2 -- Lane Ends• W4-3 -- Added Lane• W4-5 -- Entering Roadway Merge• W4-6 -- Entering Roadway Added Lane• W6-1, -2 -- Divided Highway Begins and Ends• W6-3 -- Two-Way Traffic• W10-1, -2, -3 -4, -11, -12 -- Grade Crossing Advance Warning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• W11-2 -- Pedestrian Crossing• W11-3, -4, 16 thru 22 -- Large Animals• W11-5 -- Farm Equipment• W11-6 -- Snowmobile Crossing• W11-7 -- Equestrian Crossing• W11-8 -- Fire Station• W11-10 -- Truck Crossing• W12-1 -- Double Arrow• W16-5p, -6p, -7p -- Pointing Arrow Plaques• W20-7 -- Flagger• W21-1 -- Worker

Fine Symbol Signs - Symbol signs not listed as Bold Symbol Signs.

Special Cases
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• W3-1 -- Stop Ahead: Red retroreflectivity ≥ 7• W3-2 -- Yield Ahead: Red retroreflectivity ≥ 7; White retroreflectivity ≥ 35• W3-3 -- Signal Ahead: Red retroreflectivity ≥ 7; Green retroreflectivity ≥ 7• W3-5 -- Speed Reduction: White retroreflectivity ≥ 50• For non-diamond shaped signs such as W14-3 (No Passing Zone), W4-4p (Cross Traffic Does Not Stop), or W13-1P, -2, -3, -6, -7 (Speed Advisory Plaques, use the largest sign dimension to determine proper minimum retroreflectivity level.

Source: 2014 MN MUTCD

Source: 2014 MN MUTCD



Which meet retroreflectivity requirements?

- The minimum retroreflectivity levels are in units of – Candelas / lux / meter² measured at an observation angle of 0.2° and an entrance angle of -4.0°.
- All Regulatory, Warning and Guide signs and object markers are required to be retroreflective or illuminated to show the same shape and similar color by both day and night. The requirement for sign illumination is not considered to be satisfied by street, highway or strobe lighting. An agency may exclude the following signs from the retroreflectivity maintenance policy. Guide signs should be added to an agency's policy as resources allow.
 - Guide Signs
 - Parking, Standing and Stopping signs (R7 and R8 series)
 - Walking/Hitchhiking/Crossing signs (R9 series, R10-1 through R10-b)
 - Adopt-A-Highway signs
 - All signs with blue (motor services) or brown (recreational) backgrounds
 - Bikeway signs that are intended for exclusive use by bicyclists or pedestrians



Retroreflective Sheeting Designations

Frequently Asked Questions about Sign Maintenance

- Can any type of sheeting material be used as long as it meets the minimum retroreflectivity levels?
 - Type I sheeting shall not be used for Warning, Guide or Work Zone signs. Type II and III should not be used on Overhead Guide signs. (Even brand new Type I, II, and III sheeting material is not bright enough to be used in these applications.)
 - Type I sheeting may be used for STOP signs and Black on White Regulatory signs.
 - Even though a particular type of sheeting may initially meet the minimum retroreflectivity levels when new, it might quickly degrade to below the specified threshold levels. The use of higher performance sheeting, even though it has a higher initial cost, usually provides a better life cycle cost.
- Is brighter always better for sign sheeting?
 - Usually. It is generally true that brighter signs are more conspicuous and legible. However, legibility is also a function of letter (or image) size—a good rule of thumb is 30 feet of legibility distance for each inch of letter height.
 - Older drivers may have trouble seeing signs with very high retroreflectivity levels in dark, rural locations. To mitigate this, signs may be turned at an angle to the roadway or a lesser retroreflective sheeting material may be used.
- When upgrading the sheeting material, do sign supports also need to be addressed?
 - Post-mounted sign and object marker supports within the clear zone shall be crashworthy (breakaway, yielding or shielded with a longitudinal barrier or crash cushion). (See page E-14 for details)

ASTM Type	Previous Designation	Typical Application
I	Engineering Grade	Highway Signing, construction-zone devices and delineators
II	Super Engineering Grade	Highway Signing, construction-zone devices and delineators
III	High Intensity	Highway Signing, construction-zone devices and delineators
IV	High Intensity Prismatic	Highway Signing, construction-zone devices and delineators
V		Delineators
VI	Diamond Grade Flexibility Signs	Temporary roll-up signs, warning signs, traffic cone collars and post bands
VII	Long Distance Performance (LDP)	Highway Signing, construction-zone devices and delineators
VIII	MVP Prismatic	Highway Signing, construction-zone devices and delineators
IX	Visual Impact Performance (VIP)	Highway Signing, construction-zone devices and delineators
X	Crystal Grade	Highway Signing, construction-zone devices and delineators
XI	Diamond Grade (DG3)	Highway Signing, construction-zone devices and delineators

Comparison of Reflective Sheeting Material

Life Cycle Costs & Initial Retroreflectivity

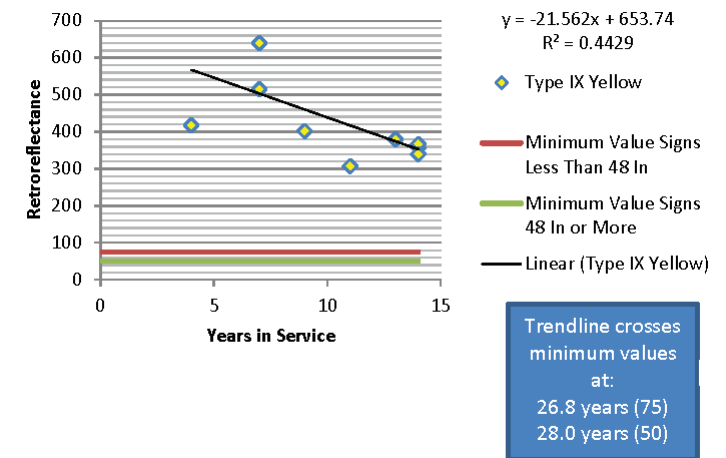
Sheeting Material (ASTM)	Type I	Type IV	Type IX	Type XI
Material Cost (\$/SF)	\$0.85	\$1.20	\$4.25	\$3.50
Finished Sign Cost	\$30	\$25	\$51	\$45
Anticipated Life (years)	5 – 7	10-12	15	20
Life Cycle Cost	\$130	\$50	\$119	\$45
Initial Retroreflectivity (white)	70	300	380	580

Source: 3M Traffic Safety Systems Division, August 2014

Typical Installation Cost				
Stop (30x30)	\$240	\$240	\$260	\$250
Warning (36x36)	\$240	\$260	\$280	\$275
Regulatory (24x30)	\$230	\$230	\$250	\$255

Source: MnDOT

Sample Degradation Curve Type IX Yellow

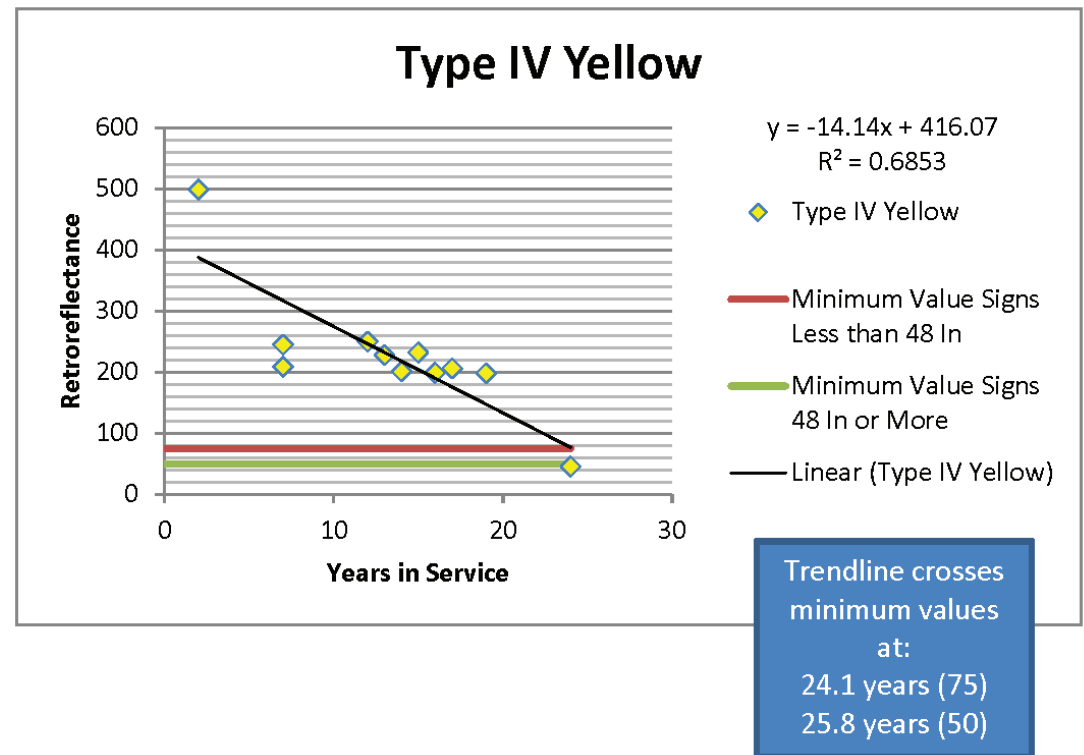


Source: MnDOT Research Report 2014-20 "Traffic Sign Life Expectancy"

- A comparison of the types of reflective sheeting material suggests:
 - The low initial cost material would meet most of the minimum retroreflectivity levels but would be expected to degrade quickly below minimum levels.
 - The higher performance sheeting, initially more expensive, provides a much longer anticipated life, much higher levels of retroreflectivity and superior life cycle costs.
- The fairly narrow range of typical sign installation costs (sign blank + sheeting + posts + labor) suggests that agencies would pay a premium of between 5% to 15% for using higher performance sheeting.
- Additional installation cost information provided by a number of agencies indicates that quantity discounts could reduce the per sign cost by 20% to 30%.

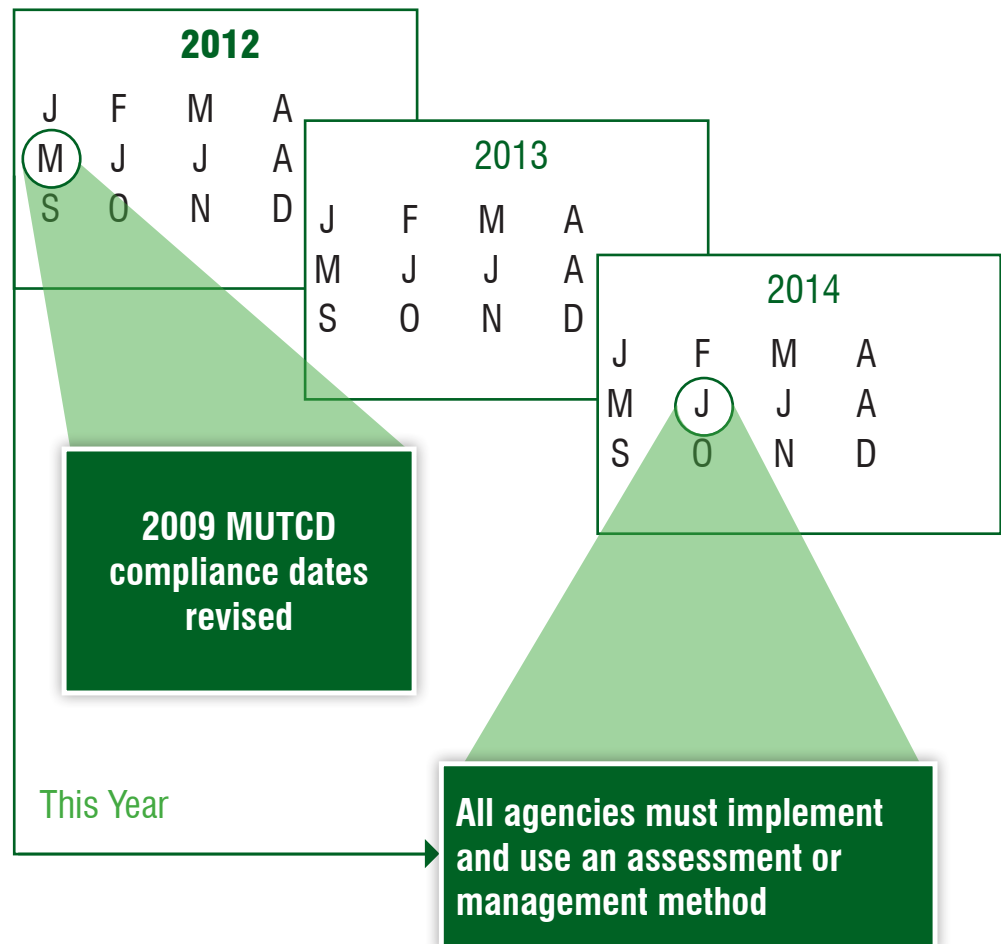
Traffic Sign Life Expectancy

- Regarding the anticipated life of signs – there is a high level of interest in establishing a specific value for each type of sheeting material. However, current research suggests that available data is inconclusive, but supports a life expectancy range of 12 to 20 years for beaded sheeting material (Types I, II and III) and 15 to 30 years for prismatic sheeting (Types III, IV, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI). A summary of this research is provided in a recent report published by MnDOT (Traffic Sign Life Expectancy – Report No. 2014-20).
- MnDOT Report No. 2014-20 analyzed retroreflectivity readings from approximately 400 signs in Minnesota and concluded that the results were similar to those reported in other states, but that the small sample size was not sufficient to produce statistically reliable results.
- As part of this study, MnDOT established a sign sheeting test deck at the MnROAD facility and has indicated that they intend to maintain the test deck and continue recording the retroreflectivity until the sheeting material degrades below the established thresholds. This effort would help define the expected life of sheeting material in Minnesota.



Retroreflectivity Compliance Dates

- May 14, 2012 - 2009 MUTCD compliance dates revised (most eliminated).
- June 13, 2014 – All agencies must implement and use an assessment or management method that is designed to maintain Regulatory and Warning traffic sign retroreflectivity at or above the established minimum levels.
- ALL signs must now be at or above minimum retroreflectivity levels or illuminated to show the same shape and similar color by both day and night.
- Existing signs must be compliant as outlined in the sign assessment or management method.



Consequences for Non-Compliance



- There are no sign police in Minnesota to check to see if your agency is complying with MN MUTCD.
- However, the closer an agency's practices are to being consistent with the guidance in the MN MUTCD, the better the agency will be from a risk-management standpoint.
- It also appears that an agency's culture, relating to adopting signing practices consistent with the MN MUTCD, is established by the agency's manager – the County or City engineer. The better these professionals understand the guidance in the MN MUTCD and share that knowledge with designers and field personnel during training sessions, the more likely the agency's actual practices will be consistent with the MN MUTCD.
- In Minnesota the standard of care against which traffic professionals are measured is –what would a reasonable person have done under a given set of circumstances. In most cases the better answer is to have followed the guidance in the MN MUTCD.
- **ALL** signs are required to be retroreflective or illuminated to show the same shape and similar color by both day and night.
- Only Regulatory and Warning signs are required to be included in an agency's retroreflectivity maintenance policy. Guide signs should be added as resources allow.



What's wrong with this picture?
(See page G-3 for answer.)

Part B – Maintenance Methods

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Maintenance Methods

Management

- Expected Sign Life
- Blanket Replacement
- Control Signs



Assessment

- Visual Nighttime Assessment
- Measured Sign Retroreflectivity



Combination or Other Methods

- Some examples include:
- Blanket Replacement & Expected Sign Life
 - Visual Nighttime Inspection & Control Signs
 - Other Methods documented in an Engineering Study

How Do I Decide?

■ What Are The Choices?

- Assessment Methods
 - Visual Nighttime Assessment
 - Calibration Signs Procedure
 - Comparison Panels Procedure
 - Consistent Parameters Procedure
 - Measured Sign Retroreflectivity
- Management Methods
 - Expected Sign Life
 - Blanket Replacement
 - Control Signs
- Combination or Other Methods
 - Blanket Replacement & Expected Sign Life
 - Visual Nighttime Inspection & Control Signs
 - Other Methods documented in an Engineering Study

Assessment Methods (1/2)

1. Visual Nighttime Assessment

This is an in the field assessment of retroreflectivity made by trained inspectors during nighttime conditions. The inspection should be conducted at normal speed from the travel lane, using the low-beam headlights and at typical viewing distances (180 feet for street name blades, 300 feet for stop signs and up to 1,100 feet for symbol type warning signs based on a 30 feet per inch legibility distance). One or more of the following procedures should be used to support the visual nighttime inspections.

Calibration Signs Procedure*

- An inspector views a calibration sign each time prior to conducting a nighttime field review. The calibration signs have known retroreflectivity levels at or above the specified minimums. The calibration signs are set up in a maintenance yard where the inspector can view the signs in a manner similar to nighttime field inspections. The inspector uses the visual appearance of the calibration sign to establish the evaluation threshold for that night's inspection activities.

¹ Inspectors must be trained. Training courses are available through many Local Technical Assistance Programs (LTAP); check <http://www.ltap.org>



Comparison Panels Procedure*

- This procedure involves assembling a set of comparison panels that represent retroreflectivity levels above the specified minimums. Inspectors then conduct a nighttime field review and when a marginal sign is found, a comparison panel is attached and the sign/panel combination is viewed. The signs found to be less bright than the panel would then be scheduled for replacement.

Consistent Parameters Procedure

- The nighttime inspections would be conducted under similar factors that were used in the research to develop the minimum retroreflectivity levels. These factors include:
 - Using a sport utility vehicle or pick-up truck to conduct the inspection.
 - Using a model year 2000 or newer vehicle for the inspection.
 - Using an inspector who is at least 60 years old with 20/40 normal or corrected and 105 degrees of peripheral vision.

* A kit with samples of sheeting material at the thresholds currently available from Avery Dennison® www.averydennison.com

Assessment Methods (2/2)



Source: FHWA Sign Retroreflectivity Guidebook, September 2009

2. Measured Sign Retroreflectivity

- The retroreflectivity of every sign in your system is measured with a retroreflectometer* and the results are compared to the threshold levels documented in Table 2A-3 of the MN MUTCD. Signs with actual retroreflectivity levels below the specified minimums would be scheduled for replacement.

* Purchases or rentals are currently available from pppcatalog.com

Management Methods

1. Expected Sign Life

- When signs are installed, the installation date would be recorded so that the age of the sign is known. The age of the sign is compared to the expected sign life – based on the documented retroreflectivity degradation for a specific geographic area compared to the minimum levels. Signs older than the expected sign life would be scheduled for replacement.

2. Blanket Replacement

- All signs in an area/corridor would be replaced at specified intervals. The replacement interval would be based on the expected sign life or warranty period. This method eliminates the need to assess retroreflectivity or track the life of individual signs. If the warranty period is 12 years, replacing 1/12 of the signs each year would demonstrate compliance with the specified minimum retroreflectivity levels.



Source: FHWA Sign Retroreflectivity Toolkit

3. Control Signs

- Replacement of signs in your system would be based on the performance of a small sample of control signs. For convenience and safety, the small sample of signs (all of the basic colors, oriented in the most adverse direction) would be located in a maintenance yard and these signs would then be monitored to determine when they are at the end of their retroreflective life. All field signs, represented by the control sample would then be replaced just before the control samples reach the minimum specified levels. New signs would have to be added to the control sample every year.

What Method is Best for Your Agency? (1/2)



Source: FHWA Sign Retroreflectivity Guidebook, September 2009

Assessment Methods (Visual Assessment, Measured Sign Retroreflectivity)

- Requires training and lots of staff hours on the road. Your inspectors will have to view every one of your signs in the field (at 20 signs/hour, 10,000 signs [typical county] \approx 500 hours per year).
- May require the purchase of technology—a retroflectometer or reflective sheeting samples—and an investment of training your staff.
- The primary advantage of using one of the Assessment Methods is that your agency will get the most years of service from each sign in your inventory as is practically possible.

Management Methods (Expected Sign Life, Blanket Replacement, Control Signs)

- Reduces staff time in the field versus possibly replacing some signs before they meet the minimum thresholds.
- It has been suggested that if you are concerned about replacing signs with some life left in the sheeting material, you could go through the effort of measuring for retroreflectivity of salvaged signs after they are delivered to your maintenance yard for use as replacements for signs damaged by vandalism or knockdowns.

Maintenance Methods	Types	Staff Hours	Technology	Service Life Lost From Each Sign
Assessment	Visual Nighttime Inspection	\$\$\$	\$\$\$	\$
	Measured Sign Retroreflectivity			
Management	Expected Sign Life	\$	\$	\$\$\$
	Blanket Replacement			
	Control Signs			

What Method is Best for Your Agency? (2/2)

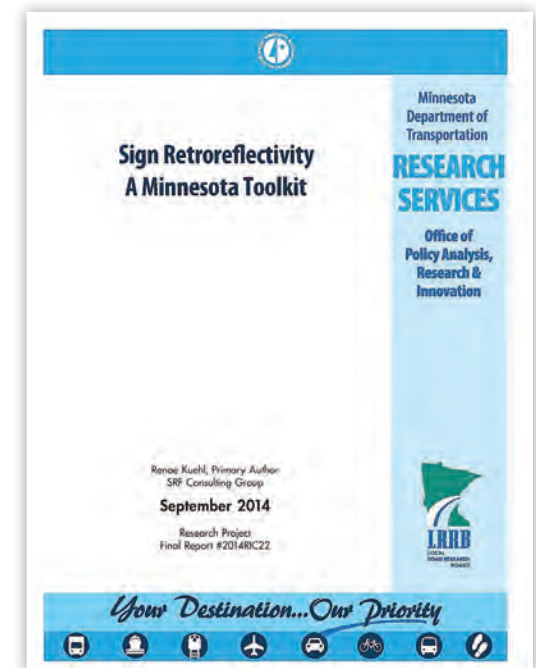
So which Method is Best?

- No one can tell you which method is best. Sign Retroreflectivity A Minnesota Toolkit can provide some assistance, but you know the characteristics of your system and your organization better than anyone else. Think about three primary factors:
 - Inventory
 - If the number of signs on your system is small (<500), conducting an annual inspection would be relatively easy.
 - If the number of signs on your system is large (>10,000), conducting an annual inspection could require 500 or more staff hours per year; so you should consider one of the management methods.
 - Staff
 - If your professional staff is trained and has experience conducting nighttime inspections, it would be easy to continue.
 - If you don't have trained staff, the choices would include adding staff and training them or using one of the management methods.
 - Technology
 - If you already own or are willing to purchase a retroreflectometer* or buy a kit with samples of sheeting material at the thresholds**, the measurement method may be best.
 - If you are not willing to make these investments, the visual assessment, consistent parameters or one of the management methods would be a better choice.

**Make a decision, move forward, evaluate,
and make changes if you have to.**

* Purchases or rentals are currently available from pppcatalog.com

**A kit with samples of sheeting material at the thresholds currently available from Avery Dennison®
www.averydennison.com



www.lrrb.org



What's wrong with this picture?
(See page G-3 for answer.)

Part C – Financial Budgeting

Financial Budgeting	C-2	Real Life Sign Removals - Stevens County Townships.....	C-11
Financial Budgeting – Townships	C-3 to C-4	Which Signs Were Removed? - Stevens County Township	C-12 to C-15
Financial Budgeting – Cities under 5,000 Population.....	C-5 to C-6	What Could This Mean for my Township Sign Maintenance Budget	C-16
Financial Budgeting – Cities over 5,000 Population.....	C-7 to C-8	Financial Budgeting – Summary	C-17
Financial Budgeting – Counties	C-9 to C-10		

Financial Budgeting

OK, I get it – the retroreflectivity requirements apply to my agency!
How much is it going to cost to comply?

That depends...

- Number of signs in your inventory
- Selected replacement schedule and method
- Estimated annual cost to address vandalism and knockdowns



Financial Budgeting – Townships (1/2)

- A typical Township has approximately 30 miles of roadway with an average of 6 total traffic signs per mile (both directions).
- The Township Sign Program¹ documented an average cost for sign replacement to be \$150 per sign.*
- The total cost to upgrade/replace regulatory and warning signs in a typical Township would be:

30 miles



x 6 signs/mile



x \$150/sign = \$27,000

- All signs must be retroreflective or illuminated. Only Regulatory and Warning signs must be a part of your assessment or management method. Add Guide signs as resources allow.
- A strategy to consider in an effort to reduce your assessment or management method costs – reduce your inventory of signs.

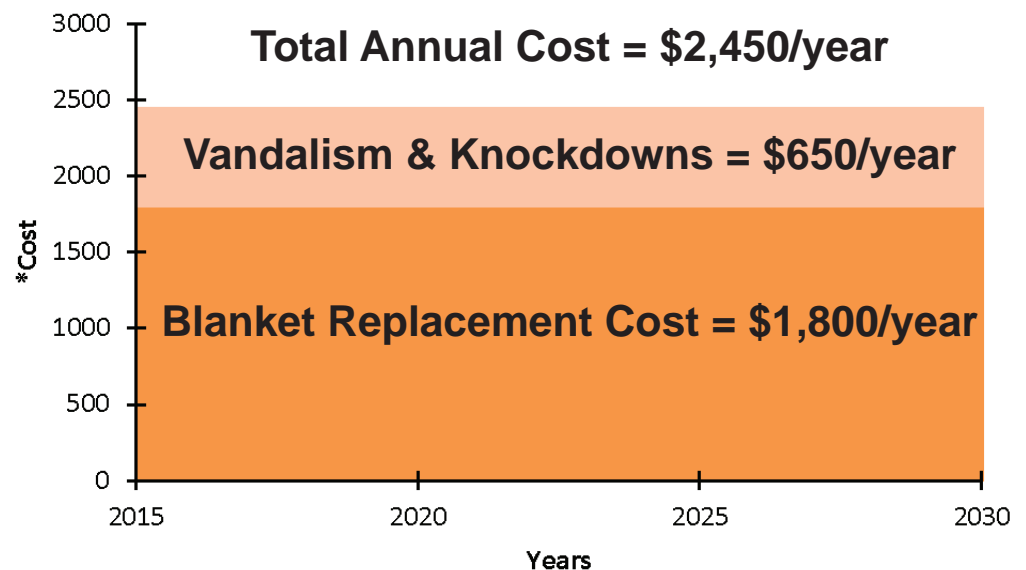


¹ MnDOT Township Sign Inventory and Replacement Pilot Program

* Replacement costs include sign blank, sheeting material, sign posts and installation.
Constant 2014 \$

Financial Budgeting – Townships (2/2)

- Maintaining your system of signs has always been a good idea, but now it's a required action.
- Given the minimum level of required maintenance, agencies should re-evaluate their sign maintenance budgets.
- Annual sign maintenance budget = cost to address retroreflectivity + cost to address vandalism, knockdowns and mother nature.
- A study from the North Carolina Department of Transportation¹ found that approximately 2.4% of signs are vandalized or knocked down in a year.
- Annual cost to address degradation of retroreflectivity (Assuming a 15 year replacement cycle) = \$1,800
- Annual cost to address damage by vandalism and knockdowns = \$650
- A typical township annual sign maintenance budget = \$2,450
- Reduce the sign maintenance budget by removing signs that are NOT required.



* Constant 2014\$

¹ North Carolina Department of Transportation, "Designing an Efficient Nighttime Sign Inspection Procedure to Ensure Motorist Safety"

Financial Budgeting – Cities under 5,000 Population (1/2)

- A typical small city has approximately 50 miles of streets with an average of 25 regulatory and warning signs per mile plus 6 guide signs per mile (both directions).
- A typical cost for replacing the regulatory and warning signs is \$200 per sign* and \$250 per sign* for the guide (street name) signs.
- The total cost to upgrade/replace ALL of the signs in a typical small city would be:

$$\begin{array}{lcl} 50 \text{ miles} & \times & 25 \text{ signs/mile} \times \$200/\text{sign} \\ & & \text{SPEED LIMIT 35} \quad \text{+} \\ & \times & 6 \text{ signs/mile} \times \$250/\text{sign} \\ & & \text{E Main St} \end{array} = \$325,000$$

- All signs must be retroreflective or illuminated. Only Regulatory and Warning signs must be a part of your assessment or management method. Add Guide signs as resources allow.
- Consider reducing your inventory of signs.



* Replacement costs include sign blank, sheeting material, sign posts, and installation.
Constant 2014 \$

Financial Budgeting – Cities under 5,000 Population (2/2)

- Maintaining your system of signs has always been a good idea, but now it's a required action.
- Given the minimum level of required maintenance, agencies should re-evaluate their sign maintenance budgets.
- Annual sign maintenance budget = cost to address retroreflectivity + cost to address vandalism, knockdowns and mother nature.
- A study from the North Carolina Department of Transportation¹ found that approximately 2.4% of signs are vandalized or knocked down in a year.
- Annual cost to address degradation of retroreflectivity (Assuming a 15 year replacement cycle) = \$21,650
- Annual cost to address damage by vandalism and knockdowns = \$7,800
- A typical small city annual sign maintenance budget = \$29,450
- Reduce the sign maintenance budget by removing signs that are NOT required.



* Constant 2014\$

¹ North Carolina Department of Transportation, "Designing an Efficient Nighttime Sign Inspection Procedure to Ensure Motorist Safety"

Financial Budgeting – Cities over 5,000 Population (1/2)

- A typical large city has approximately 200 miles of city streets with an average of 25 regulatory and warning signs per mile plus 6 guide signs per mile (both directions).
- A typical cost for replacing the regulatory and warning signs is \$200 per sign* and \$250 per sign* for the guide (street name) signs.
- The total cost to upgrade/replace ALL of the signs in a typical large city would be:

$$\begin{array}{lcl}
 200 \text{ miles} & \times & 25 \text{ signs/mile} \times \$200/\text{sign} \\
 & & \text{SPEED LIMIT 35} \quad \text{+} \\
 & & = \$1,300,000 \\
 & \times & 6 \text{ signs/mile} \times \$250/\text{sign} \\
 & & \text{E Main St}
 \end{array}$$

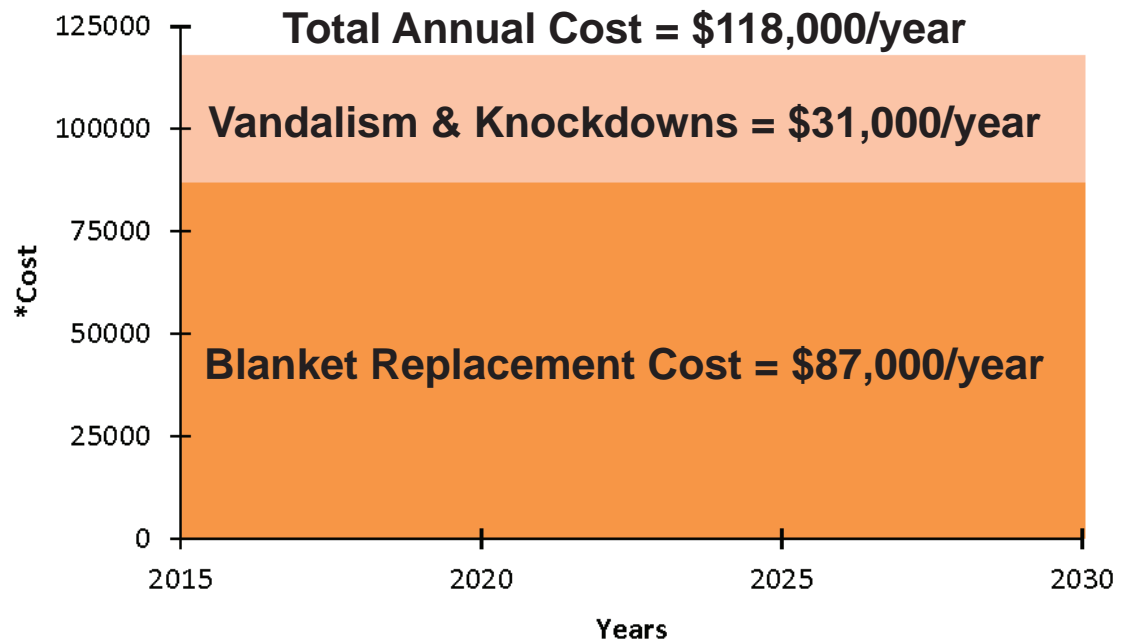
- All signs must be retroreflective or illuminated. Only Regulatory and Warning signs must be a part of your assessment or management method. Add Guide signs as resources allow.
- Consider reducing your inventory of signs



* Replacement costs include sign blank, sheeting material, sign posts, and installation.
Constant 2014 \$

Financial Budgeting – Cities over 5,000 Population (2/2)

- Maintaining your system of signs has always been a good idea, but now it's a required action.
- Given the minimum level of required maintenance, agencies should re-evaluate their sign maintenance budgets.
- Annual sign maintenance budget = cost to address retroreflectivity + cost to address vandalism, knockdowns and mother nature.
- A study from the North Carolina Department of Transportation¹ found that approximately 2.4% of signs are vandalized or knocked down in a year.
- Annual cost to address degradation of retroreflectivity (Assuming a 15 year replacement cycle) = \$87,000
- Annual cost to address damage by vandalism and knockdowns = \$31,000
- A typical large city annual sign maintenance budget = \$118,000
- Reduce the sign maintenance budget by removing signs that are NOT required.



* Constant 2014\$

¹ North Carolina Department of Transportation, "Designing an Efficient Nighttime Sign Inspection Procedure to Ensure Motorist Safety"

Financial Budgeting – Counties (1/2)

- A typical county highway system consists of approximately 500 miles of rural roadways with an average of 20 traffic signs per mile (both directions).
- A typical sign replacement cost is \$200 per sign*.
- The total cost to upgrade/replace signs in a typical County would be:

$$500 \text{ miles} \times 20 \text{ signs/mile} \times \$200/\text{sign} = \$2,000,000$$

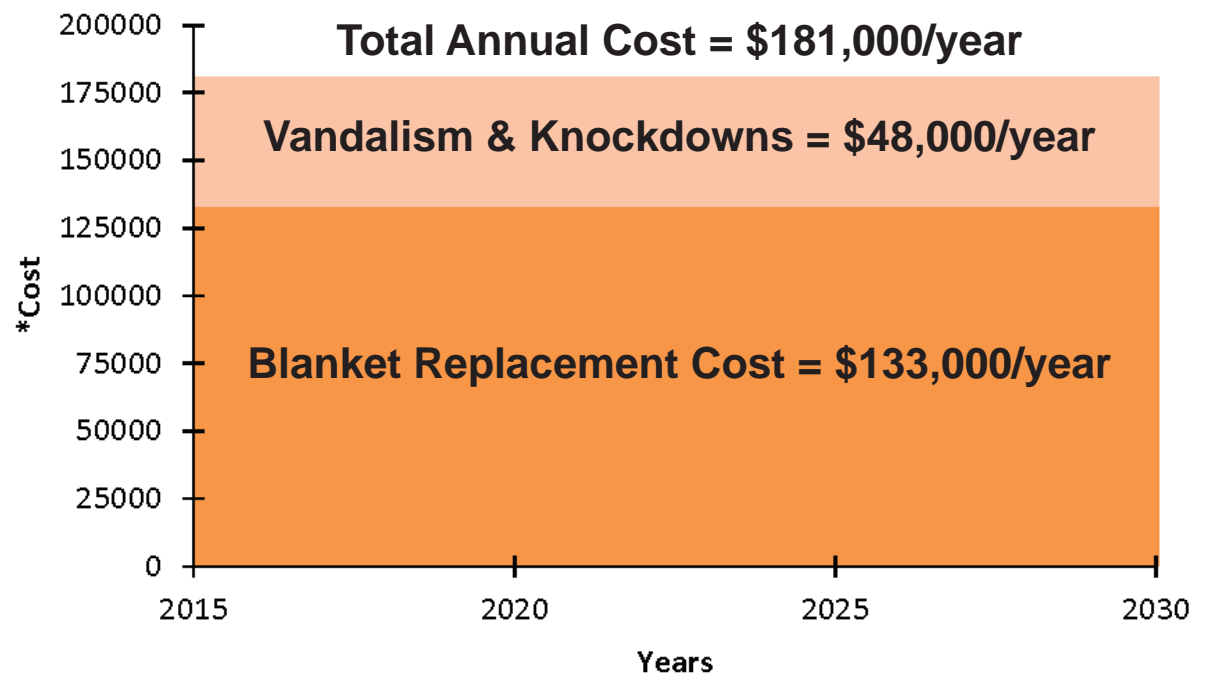
- All signs must be retroreflective or illuminated. Only Regulatory and Warning signs must be a part of your assessment or management method. Add Guide signs as resources allow.
- Another strategy to consider in an effort to reduce your costs – reduce your inventory of signs.



* Replacement costs include sign blank, sheeting material, sign posts, and installation.
Constant 2014 \$

Financial Budgeting – Counties (2/2)

- Maintaining your system of signs has always been a good idea, but now it's a required action.
- Given the minimum level of required maintenance, agencies should re-evaluate their sign maintenance budgets.
- Annual sign maintenance budget = cost to address retroreflectivity + cost to address vandalism, knockdowns and mother nature.
- A study from the North Carolina Department of Transportation¹ found that approximately 2.4% of signs are vandalized or knocked down in a year.
- Annual cost to address degradation of retroreflectivity (Assuming a 15 year replacement cycle) = \$133,000
- Annual cost to address damage by vandalism and knockdowns = \$48,000
- A typical county annual sign maintenance budget = \$181,000
- Reduce the sign maintenance budget by removing signs that are NOT required.



* Constant 2014\$

¹ North Carolina Department of Transportation, "Designing an Efficient Nighttime Sign Inspection Procedure to Ensure Motorist Safety"

Real Life Sign Removals – Stevens County Townships

How do I get my agency on board with removing signs?

- In 2011 and 2012, MnDOT piloted a program with Townships in Stevens County to inventory signs and conduct an engineering investigation to determine which signs could be removed.
- The investigation identified 285 Regulatory, Warning and Guide Signs (28% of the total number of signs in these townships) as candidates for removal. The townships have agreed to the removals!
- Of 285 signs to be removed:
 - 93% are Warning (i.e., STOP/YIELD Ahead, Cross Road, T-Intersection signs)
 - 4% are Regulatory (i.e., YIELD, Speed Limit signs)
 - 1% are Guide (i.e., Street signs)
- The townships then benefit from long term savings by reducing costs for installation, along with yearly inventory and maintenance.



Which signs were removed? – Stevens County Townships



- Intersection warning signs: where the intersection is visible (MN MUTCD Table 2C-4).
- STOP or Yield Ahead signs: where the STOP or Yield sign is clearly visible to the driver (MN MUTCD Table 2C-4).
- Neither of these signs are required by MN MUTCD.
- There is no proof that these signs have ever proven to be effective at improving safety or changing driver behavior when the condition is visible to the driver.
- System wide consistency and consideration for signs at similar locations is important.
- If no apparent risks are associated with the intersection (i.e. visibility, high traffic volumes), then signs are candidates for removal.

Which signs were removed? – Stevens County Townships

- Watch for children signs: these are not effective at increasing safety and do not change driver behavior.
 - Do not give clear and enforceable guidance to drivers.
 - Provide a false sense of security to parents and children that may increase risk.
 - Give the false impression that areas without signs do not have children.
 - Represent an unnecessary cost that then propagates as additional signs are requested.
 - Violates the principle that signage should be based on engineering not political judgment.
- Research indicates that signs that warn of occasional conditions (a child that may be present on the road only occasionally as opposed to a curve that is always present) that are rare are virtually ignored by most drivers¹.
- The basic objective of warning signs is to make drivers aware of unexpected conditions that are not readily apparent - it is hard to imagine that encountering a tractor on a rural road in an agricultural area would be either unexpected or not readily apparent.
- Not required by MN MUTCD.



¹ Wisconsin Department of Transportation, "Effectiveness of Children at Play" Warning Signs, Transportation Synthesis Report, 2007

Which signs were removed? – Stevens County Townships



- A Turn sign should be used instead of a Curve sign in advance of curves that have advisory speeds of 30 MPH or less.
- Horizontal alignment series signs are required by MN MUTCD on roads with greater than 1,000 vehicles per day and is suggested for other roads based on speed differential on curve approaches.
- Warning signs were removed where the roadway does not match the scenario on the provided sign or if they were not needed or required in the first place.
- Key is consistency - If curve warning signs are used at some locations, all curves with similar radii should have similar signs and advisory speeds.

Which signs were removed – Stevens County Townships



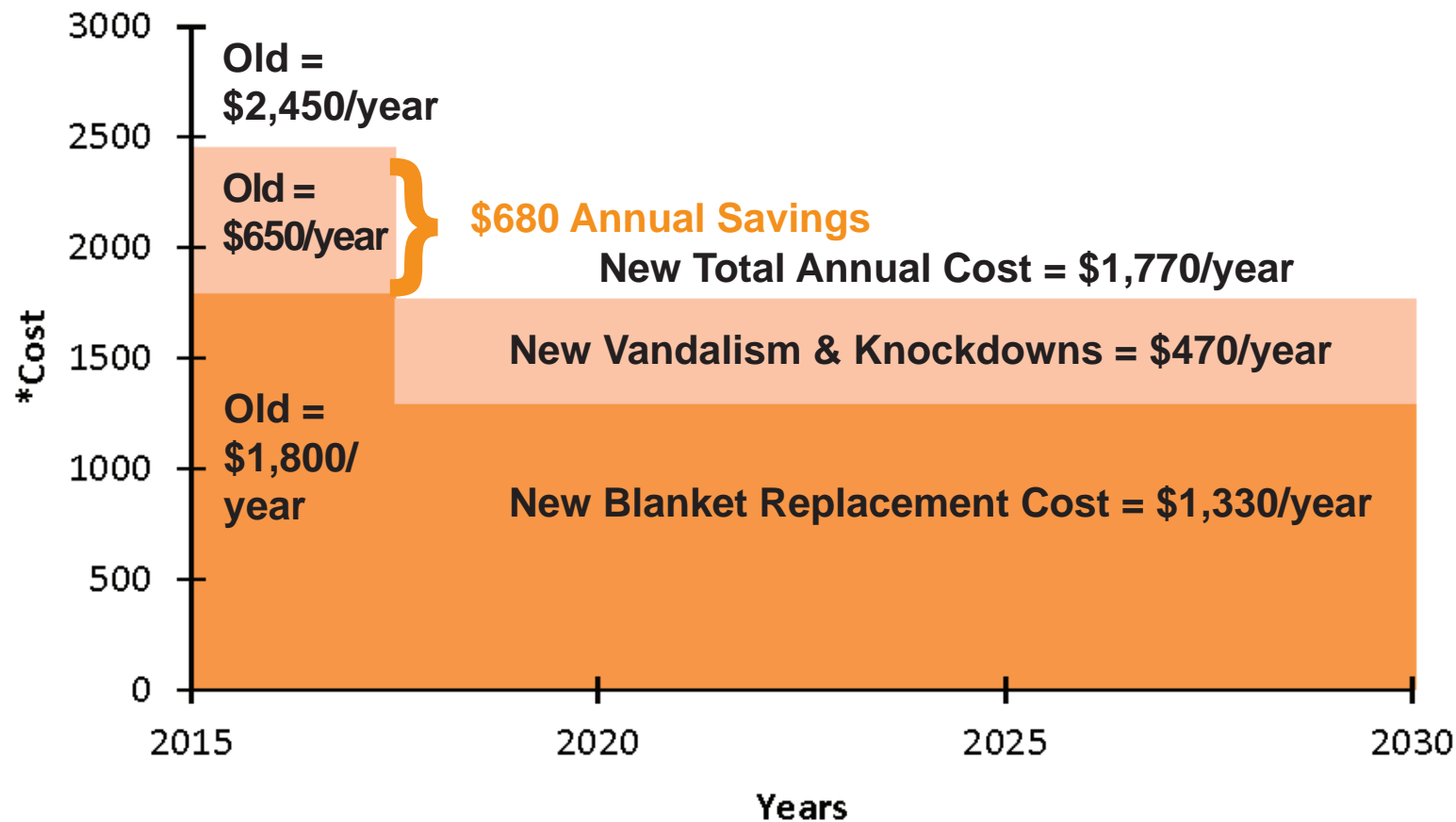
- Yield signs: were removed along Minimum Maintenance Roads (MN Statute § 160.095) since these roads, by definition, are “only occasionally or intermittently used for passenger and commercial travel”.
- Research has proven that at extremely low volume intersections, increasing the level of intersection control by adding STOP or YIELD sign does not improve safety.^{1, 2}

¹ Wisconsin Department of Transportation, “Effectiveness of Children at Play” Warning Signs, Transportation Synthesis Report, 2007

² Souleyrette, Tenges, McDonald, Maze, “Guidelines for the Removal of Traffic Control Devices in Rural Areas”, Iowa Highway Research Board Project TR-527, 2005

What Could This Mean for my Township Sign Maintenance Budget?

- Reducing your sign inventory by 28%, would result in a 28% savings in your annual sign maintenance budget.
- This is a representation of total savings in Townships. In jurisdictions with larger sign inventory, the savings would be even greater.



Financial Budgeting – Summary



- You probably found these suggested levels of investments necessary to maintain your inventory of signs as shocking as we did.
- These levels are likely to be 10 to 20 times more than you have previously spent.
- Please don't walk away from this issue and either do nothing or merely continue on with your previous levels of replacement - from a risk management perspective, the stakes are too high.
- The only part of the cost formula that you can control is the size of your inventory.
- It appears that the best way to reduce your sign maintenance costs is to reduce the size of your inventory and that will require removing some signs.
- It also appears that the best way to manage your risk when removing signs is to bring your actions under two umbrellas of immunity (from liability)
 - Discretionary Immunity - policy driven
 - Official Immunity - exercise of engineering judgement
- Another way to reduce your sign maintenance costs is to group your agency's signs with another or multiple agencies to perform maintenance and get a bulk savings.
- Intrigued? Please continue...



What's wrong with this picture?
(See page G-3 for answer.)

Part D – Policy Development

Policy Development.....	D-2	Example Signing Policy – City of Eagan, MN.....	D-6
Example Policy Outline – Sign Maintenance	D-3	Example Signing Policy – Rural County.....	D-7
Model Sign Maintenance Policy	D-4	Case Study #1: Monnens vs. City of Orono.....	D-8 to D-10
Example Policy Outline – St Louis County, MN	D-5		

Policy Development

- Signing activities have been a source of claims of negligence against highway agencies.
- Having a sign policy documenting an agency's approach to manage their signing program is a proven, effective technique for improving operations and managing risk.
- Minnesota tort law provides protection from claims of negligence called discretionary immunity for actions that are consistent with policies adopted by an agency's elected officials.
- The League of Minnesota Cities encourages their members to develop and adopt a variety of policies relative to municipal maintenance activities.
- Five specific benefits associated with policy development include:
 - Guiding allocation of resources
 - Providing direction to staff
 - Establishing the procedures to be followed
 - Setting priorities
 - Supports establishing discretionary immunity
- The League of Minnesota Cities had developed a number of model policies – check out: www.lmc.org
- The Minnesota Township Association also has a model policy at www.mntownships.org
- One caution – work with your agency's attorney when developing a policy.



Example Policy Outline – Sign Maintenance

- Purpose and Goal
- Applicable Signs and Roadways
- Resource Materials
- Sign Inventory
- Adopted Sign Maintenance Method
- Sign Replacement, i.e.:
 - High Priority (STOP) within 1 business day
 - Intermediate Priority (Regulatory, Warning and Guide signs required by MN MUTCD) – within 2 business days
 - Low Priority (All others) – within 3 business days
- Signs Placed on the Agency's Right-of-Way
- Removal of Signs
- Modification and Deviation from Policy

STANDARD - Public agencies or officials having jurisdiction shall use an assessment or management method that is designed to maintain regulatory and warning sign retroreflectivity at or above the minimum levels in Table 2A-3.

Guide signs should be added to the maintenance plan as resources allow.

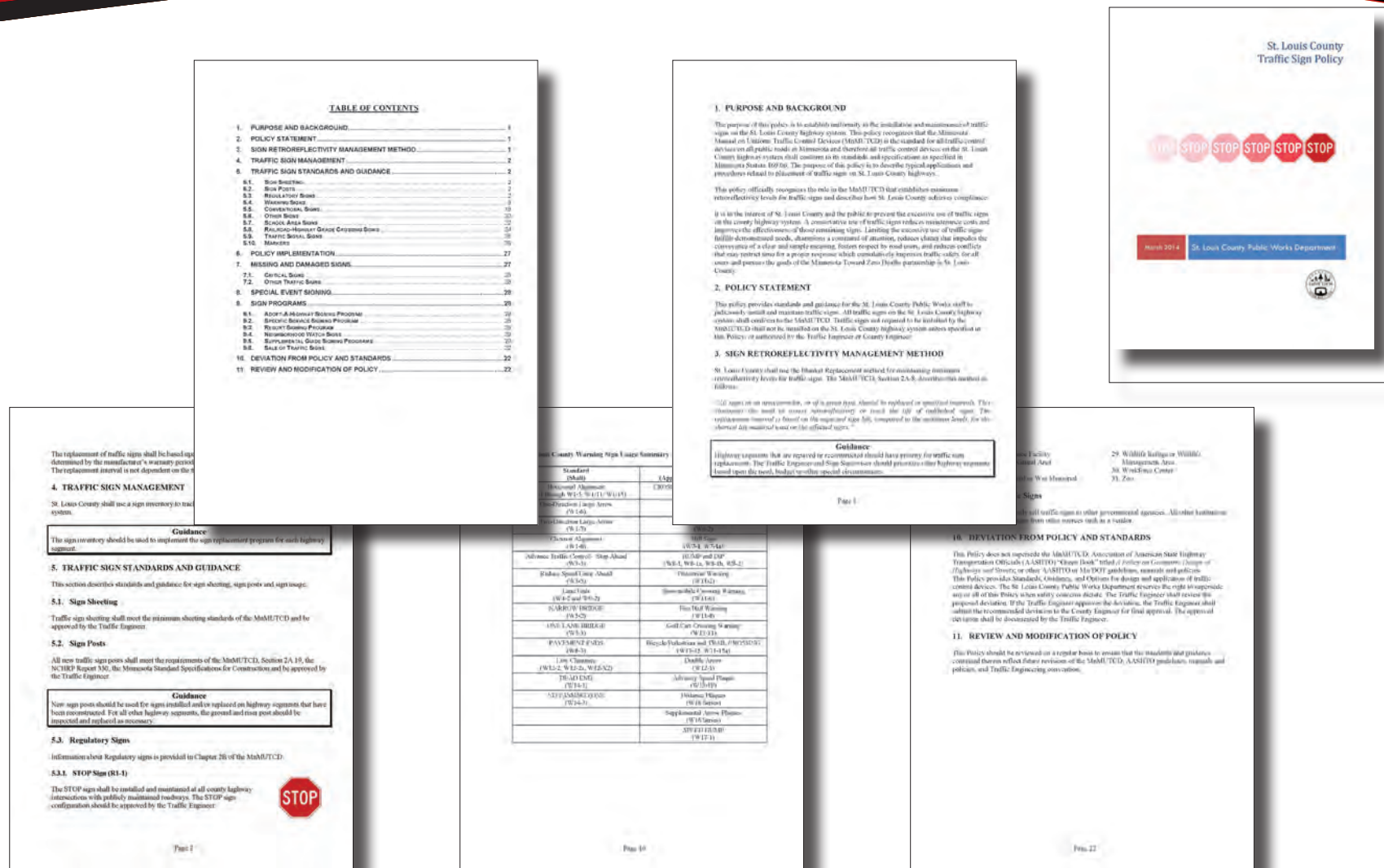
MnDOT Research Report 2014-20, “Traffic Sign Life Expectancy” has best practices for sign policies.

Model Sign Maintenance Policy

- Which sign maintenance method is adopted?
(Blanket Replacement - replace 1/15 of signs/year)
- Which **Roads** are to be covered by the policy?
 - All
 - Low Volume
 - Roadway Classifications
 - Residential
 - Collector
 - Minor Arterial
 - Principal Arterial
- Which **Signs** are to be covered by the policy?
 - All
 - Regulatory
 - Warning
 - Guide
 - All signs must conform to MN MUTCD
- What is the **Objective** of the policy?
 - Document the maintenance method
 - Exclude certain types of signs from usage (Not Required, Not Effective, i.e, No warning signs on residential streets, speed limit signs only on collectors and arterials, no marked pedestrian crossings at uncontrolled intersections, etc.)
- What **Actions** are required to implement the policy?
 - Inventory
 - Sign Replacement
 - Sign Removal
 - Engineering Study
 - Notification of Decisions/Actions
 - Sign Sheeting Material
 - Establish Budget

**The following pages provide examples of signing policies from around Minnesota.
Additional examples can be found in the Appendix.**

Example Signing Policy – St. Louis County, MN



Find more information at www.stlouiscountymn.gov

Example Signing Policy – City of Eagan, MN

IV. SIGN MAINTENANCE

Sign Maintenance

- A. Sign Installation: Signs will be installed and maintained to meet federal standards set forth in the most recent Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MnMUTCD) in accordance to City of Eagan guidelines, standard installation plate and practices.
- B. Maintain Signing, Overall Responsibility: Eagan sign maintenance practices are established to meet all requirements and ensure appropriate signing for the traveling public.
- C. Sign Retro-Reflectivity: The City of Eagan has maintained a field sign inventory database in the form of a sign management system (software) since 1993. The city is currently analyzing the database to determine the best approach to meet Federal Sign Retro-reflectivity Standards.
 1. The City of Eagan will use a combination of EXPECTED SIGN LIFE and CONTROL SIGNS as management methods.
 - a. CONTROL SIGNS
 - i. Evaluation of retro-reflectivity of city signs will continue on a 2 year cycle as it has to date (1/2 of city signs each year).
 - ii. As per Federal directives, a group of "calibration signs" will be assembled to represent a sample of each color that is known to have retro-reflectivity levels at or above minimum levels. The signs will be set up so that the sign technician can view the calibrations signs in a manner similar to nighttime field inspection conditions. The technician will use the visual appearance of the calibration signs to establish the evaluation threshold for that night's inspection activities.
 1. Calibration sign samples are needed for each color of sign in Table 2A-3 (MUTCD Manual)
 2. Calibration signs are viewed at a typical distance using the inspection vehicle. (SUV or standard P/U with low beam head lights)
 3. Calibration signs will be stored appropriately to prevent deterioration.
 4. Calibration signs retro-reflectivity will be verified periodically.
 - iii. A group of small portable samples known to have retro-reflectivity levels at or above minimum levels will be assembled to be used to assess signs that have questionable retro-reflectivity. When the visual inspection identifies questionable signs, a comparison sample may be attached to the sign and viewed as a comparison by the technician.

b. EXPECTED SIGN LIFE

- i. Expected sign life processes/practices will be established utilizing a combination of expected sheeting warranty life estimations of manufacturers/suppliers and "on the ground" experience in the field at the city. The city will develop and update as needed general criteria for life cycle replacement of signs in companion with calibration review and nighttime sign examinations.
 1. The city began installing 3M High Intensity Prismatic (HIP) sheeting signs in 2002 and migrated to 3M Diamond Grade 3 (DG3) sheeting in 2006. A system wide evaluation will occur identifying all signs that are not scheduled for replacement between now and Jan 2015. Following review and planning, the city will implement a program to replace all signs having insufficient sheeting properties (engineer grade) incrementally between now and Jan. 2015 to meet the new Fed retro-reflectivity standards. Additional planning (and implementation of plan) will occur to assure compliance for the Jan 2018 deadline at the same time.
 2. The city will plan for (budget for) replacement of all signs found via the control section/night sign checking process. The eventual goal will be that the majority of retro-reflectivity related sign replacement will be handled through the expected life cycle/sign life process.
- D. Sign Maintenance Responsibility: Maintain signs and street identification signs on all City of Eagan roadways (specific agency name) highways, with the exception of:
 - a. Signage on approaches to county highways are not installed or maintained by the city. Street name signs and stop signs intersecting with Dakota County Highways are maintained by Dakota county.
 - b. Stop signs at Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) controlled intersections and highway ramps with state/county highways.
 - c. Specific signs installed by others (Mn/DOT, transit agencies, and private signs as agreed upon by the City of Eagan.
 - d. Signs along county highways, within Mn/DOT right of way, unless specific agreement with Mn/DOT/Dakota County stipulates a city maintenance responsibility for signing.
 - e. Bike path and other pedestrian-control signs not pertaining to vehicle traffic installed by government entities other than the city.
 - f. Signs on approaches to city streets installed by private business and/or property owners.

City of Eagan, MN



Signs, Traffic Signals, Traffic Markings, Pavement Striping & Retro-reflectivity Policy

March, 2010

- ii. Sign replacement will occur as follows:
 1. Stop signs – as soon as scheduling permits
 2. All other signs – concurrent with neighborhood refurbishing replacement schedules or as determined by sign technician.

- G. Miscellaneous Sign Practices:
 - a. Sign staff is not directly on-call after normal working hours. After hours phone numbers for maintenance managers are available to Public Safety dispatchers so staff can be contacted in case of an emergency.
 - b. Training is provided to ensure traffic staff can perform sign maintenance duties in an efficient, effective and responsive manner. Such training shall consist of, at a minimum, appropriate signing and traffic control seminars (when available and funds are available in the city training budget), appropriate available training videos or website trainings, and training as appropriate and available for supervisors.
 - c. Unauthorized signs will be removed from city rights of way.
 - d. Support staff will be informed and updated regarding sign maintenance operations (e.g., schedules and other priority needs or equipment failures) to ensure accurate information is available to respond to telephone inquiries.
 - e. Sign staff may park a sign maintenance vehicle against traffic flow in order to perform necessary emergency and routine maintenance duties.
 - f. Sign staff may drive or park maintenance vehicles on the center medians or boulevards in order to perform necessary emergency and routine maintenance duties.

V. TRAFFIC SIGNALS Traffic Signals

- A. Miscellaneous Signal Practices:
 - a. City maintenance staff (Streets Engineering Technician) will respond to reports of signal damage or malfunctions as soon as possible after

Find more information at www.cityofeagan.com

Example Policy Outline – Rural County

- Simple policy includes sign inspection details, the adopted sign maintenance method, the types of sheeting material used and the assumed sign life.
- In addition, this policy states that ALL signs placed within the County's right-of-way must be consistent with the MN MUTCD AND have the County Engineers approval. This statement has been effective in helping agencies deny requests for unusual signs, such as SLOW CHILDREN at specific locations.
- Agencies should also consider conducting a nighttime sign inspection.

CHIPPEWA COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
902 NORTH 4TH STREET, MINNETONKA, MINNESOTA 55369-3623
TELEPHONE 326-200-2131
FAX 326-200-2123

Effective Date: _____
Revised Date: _____

Highway Sign Procedure

Traffic Signs

The placement and maintenance of the traffic signs on the County roadway system will be in accordance with the Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (MnMUTCD).

A. Sign Inventory

The County Highway Department has purchased sign management software "Simple Signs", and has installed the county sign inventory data into the program. It is the Maintenance Supervisor responsibility to make sure that the sign inventory is maintained and up to date.

B. Sign Maintenance

In the process of "Maintaining Traffic Sign Retroreflectivity" the County will use the Expected Sign Life method and replace the traffic sign as follows:

MATERIAL GRADE	PROMINENCE
Engineering	8 Years
HI	10 Years (South Facing) 11 Years (East-West Facing) 12 Years (North Facing)
HP	14 Years (South Facing) 15 Years (East-West Facing) 16 Years (North Facing)
VIP or DG3	18 Years (South Facing) 19 Years (East-West Facing) 20 Years (North Facing)
E-911 Signage (HP)	14 - 16 Years
E-911 Signage (DG3)	18 - 20 Years

The County Highway Department will replace traffic signs with HP sheeting unless DG3 sheeting is required, and will be phasing out the Engineering, HP and VIP sheeting signs to be in compliance with the minimum sign retroreflectivity. Based on funding, the priority for sign replacement will be as follows:

- 1) STOP and YIELD Signs
- 2) Warning Signs
- 3) Other Regulatory Signs
- 4) Informational/Guidance Signs

Page 1

Signs not required to meet the minimum sign retroreflectivity (R7 series, R8 series, R9 series, R10-1 - R10-4b, Adopt-A-Highway, Blue and Brown background, and Bikeway signs) will be replaced based on vandalism or other sign degradation.

The County Highway Department will conduct a daytime inspection, twice a year, for traffic signs along the county roads, and complete E-911 daytime inspection once a year to supplement the management program and monitor for sign replacement needs based on vandalism or other premature sign degradation.

The County Highway Department is responsible for maintaining traffic signs all county highways and the E-911 Signs in the County with the exception of:

- 1) All signing on approaches to the county highway, other than the STOP or YIELD signs that is maintain by the County.
- 2) STOP signs at MnDOT controlled intersection.
- 3) Specific signs installed by others (State Agencies and Cities), which will be under their jurisdiction. This includes street signs within the city limits.
- 4) Miscellaneous Signs requested to be placed within the right of way, along the county roadway, must meet the requirement of the MnMUTCD and have County Highway Engineer approval. (See Miscellaneous Signs Request)

C. General Sign Practice

Signs placed within the right of way, along the county roadway, must meet the requirement of the MnMUTCD.

The County Highway Department will use the following guidelines in the placement of traffic signs: (see attached Figures)

- 1) STOP or YIELD signs shall be placed at all roadway intersections on the county road system. They will be placed approximately 50 feet from the centerline of the perpendicular roadway. The Engineer will inform the County Board of proposed stop and yield changes.
- 2) STOP AHEAD signs will be installed on rural county paved roadways as they approach STOP signs. On rural county gravel roadways where the STOP or YIELD sign is obstructed from view, STOP AHEAD or YIELD AHEAD signs will be installed. STOP AHEAD or YIELD AHEAD signs will be placed approximately 700 feet from the STOP or YIELD sign.
- 3) Other warning signs will be installed approximately 400 feet from the object or condition of concern, unless otherwise determined by the County Highway Engineer.
- 4) Chevron Sign will be placed on curves with a Radius of 1000 feet or less.

**The placement of signs may vary based on terrain, condition, and engineering judgment.

The County Highway Department is responsible for the maintenance and placement of the Rural E-911 street signs for the county.

The County Highway Department has been instructed to place rumble strips on paved county roads in advance of a stop condition. The rumble strips will be placed in rural settings where the speed limit is greater than 45 MPH; no rumble strips will be placed within the city limits. Consideration will be made in the placement of the rumble strips to minimize the noise on rural residents. (See:

Page 2

attached Figure).

Miscellaneous Sign Request

Purpose

A "Miscellaneous Sign" is a sign that the County Highway Department would not typically place on the county roadway right-of-way unless requested to do so. Signs requested to be placed within the right of way, along the county roadway, must meet the requirement of the MnMUTCD and have County Highway Engineer approval.

Scope

County Highway Department will consider placing requested signs within the county roadway right-of-way once the following steps have been completed:

The request shall be submitted on the "Sign Request Form" to the County Highway Engineer for approval. The County Highway Engineer, with guidance from the MnMUTCD, MnDOT Traffic Manual and other information, will notify the person(s) making the request, of his/her decision.

The person(s) requesting the sign(s) will be responsible for 100% of the cost of the sign(s), sign posts, and other materials needed to install the sign(s), plus 10% handling fee. They will also be responsible for an installation fee as indicated on the "Sign Request Form".

Sign(s) shall be installed in conformance with the MnMUTCD. Only the county force, unless approved by the County Highway Engineer, shall be allowed to install or replace these sign(s) at our convenience.

The person(s) requesting the sign(s) will become the owner of the sign(s). The sign(s) shall be removed in 15 years or shall be removed when they are no longer applicable, whichever comes first. Once the sign has been removed as stated above a new "Sign Request Form" must be submitted for approval before a new sign(s) can be installed.

All cost associated with maintaining the sign(s) shall be the responsibility of the applicant.

D. Signs Requested Damaged or Missing

The County Highway Department does not have a sign shop so will need to order and maintain a small inventory of signs, so the general guidelines after receiving notice of a sign that are damaged or missing are follows:

Stop Signs: as soon as practical, a temporary sign will be placed if required. County personnel will be dispatched regardless of time of day and/or overtime.

Warning and Other Regulatory Signs: generally as late as three working days during normal working hours depending if the sign is in our inventory or as soon sign is received from the manufacturer.

Other Signs such as guide and information signs: generally replace as soon as practical within normal operations.

Page 3

Case Study #1: Monnens vs. City of Orono (1/3)



- In 2001, the City of Orono adopted a Community Management Plan that codified the City's desire to maintain the natural, wooded private residential nature of the community and to provide that virtually all city streets be low volume, low speed roadways.
- The Plan also identified general design (paved roads, narrow gravel shoulders, no curb and gutter and no traffic control devices that are **NOT** required by MN MUTCD) and maintenance practices (tree removal and trimming limited to sight line maintenance for motorists) intended to support the preservation of the natural, rural, residential character of the City.
- In May 2001, Kristal Monnens was killed in a single vehicle crash that occurred along one of the local roads - North Arm Drive.

Case Study #1: Monnens vs. City of Orono (2/3)

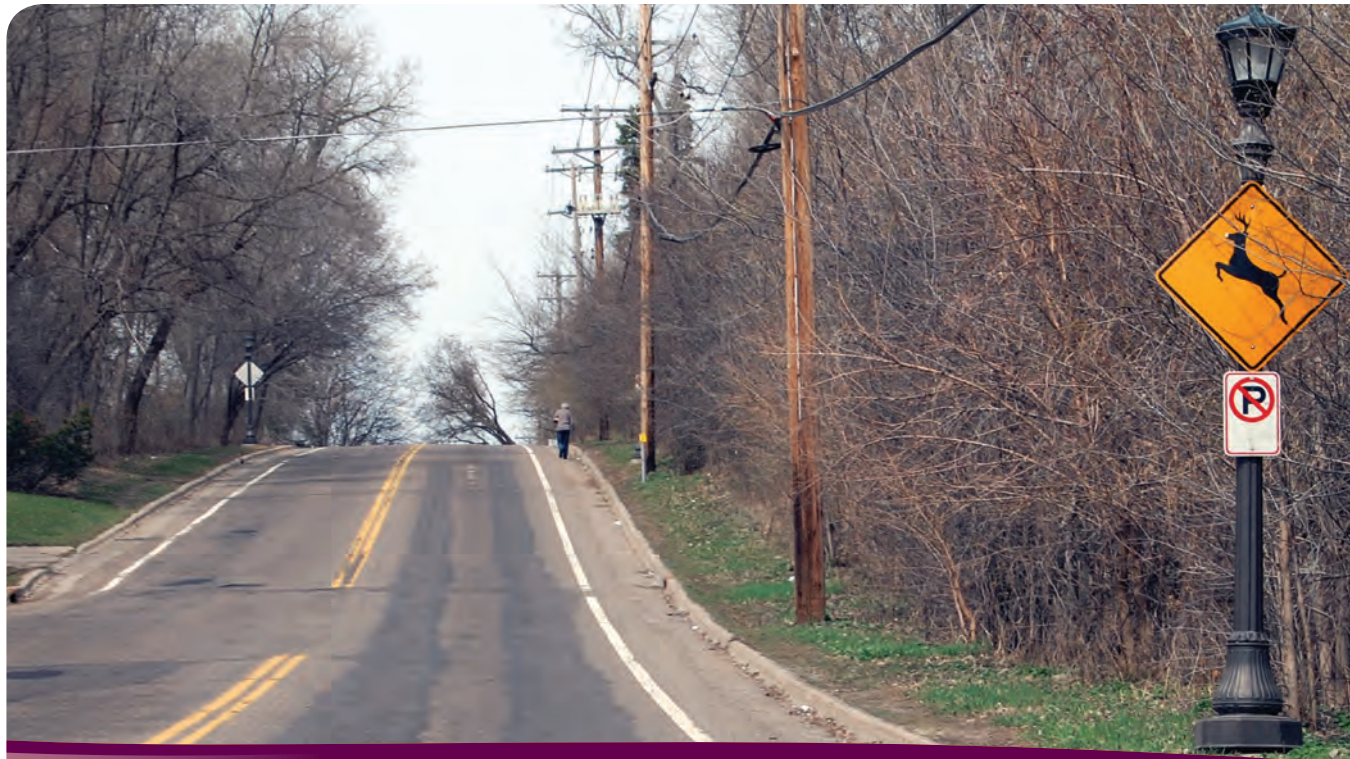


- The vehicle in which Ms. Monnens was a passenger was drag racing and was estimated exceeding 60 mph. When the vehicle failed to negotiate a curve to the left, it veered off the roadway and collided with a tree.
- The expert for the plaintiffs testified that Orono's failure to place a curve warning sign was the primary cause of the crash and was evidence of the City's negligence because the MN MUTCD **required** the use of the warning sign (though in fact, it did **NOT**).
- The City argued summary judgment - dismissal of the lawsuit based on **three** key facts.
 - First, the City's Community Management Plan specifies that in order to support the rural, residential nature of their local roads, traffic control devices that are **NOT** required will **NOT** be used.
 - Second, none of the Horizontal Alignment series of Warning signs were required (a SHALL condition) by the MN MUTCD - they were all optional signs that could be used based on engineering judgment.
 - The City had consistently avoided the use of Warning signs along their local roads.

Case Study #1: Monnens vs. City of Orono (3/3)



- Minnesota tort law provides for Discretionary Immunity where actions are found to be consistent with policies enacted by the highest decision making body of an organization (City Council, County Board, etc.) **AND** where there is evidence that the body considered social and economic issues.
 - The Court issued the Summary Judgment – agreed that Curve Warning signs were **NOT** required at that time and that the action (of not installing the curve warning sign) was consistent with the city's ordinance and was in fact covered by Discretionary Immunity.
- LESSON LEARNED →** The establishment of ordinances and/or policies that restrict the use of traffic control devices are a proven method for managing risk associated with actions that are consistent with the adopted ordinances.

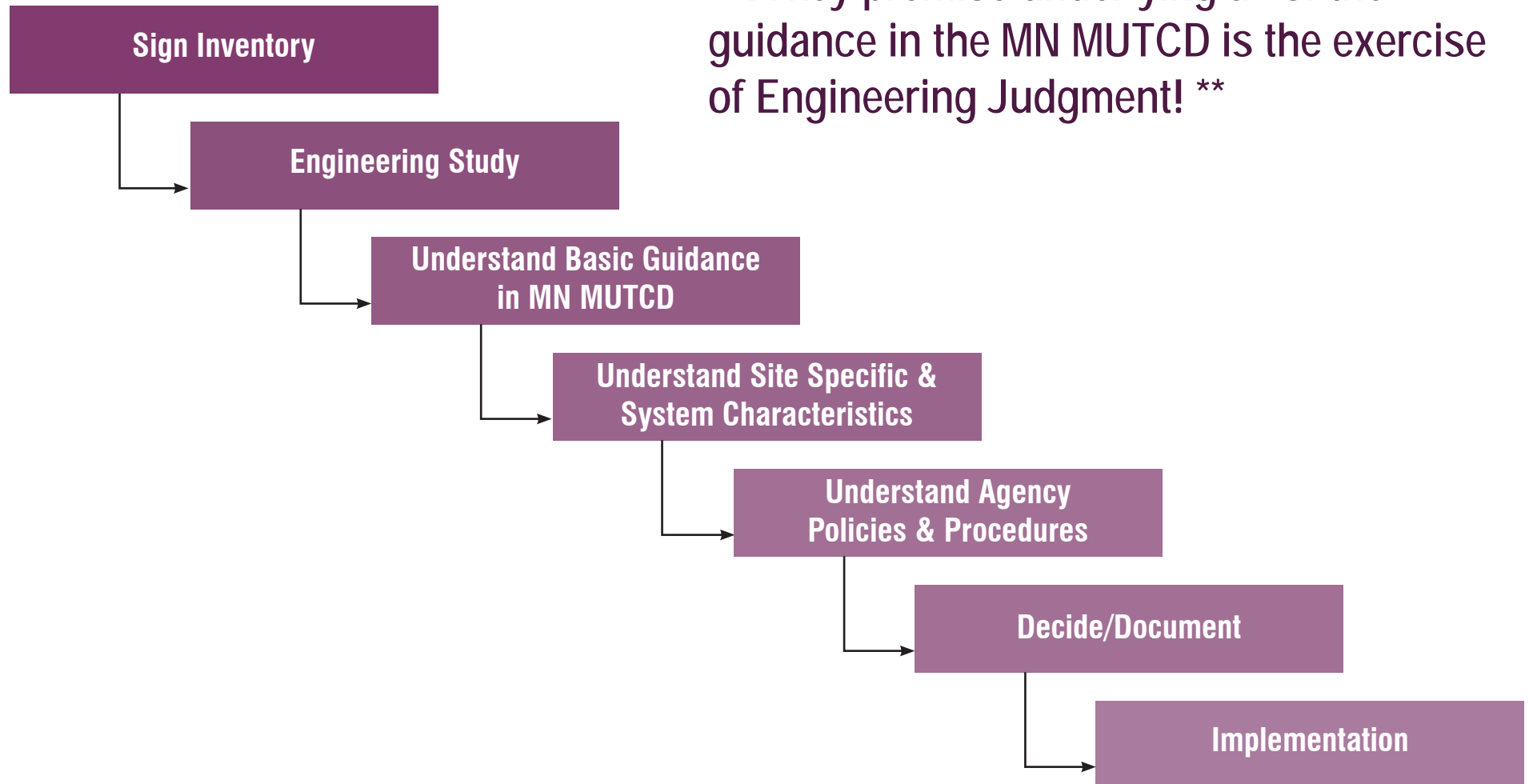


Part E – Implementation

Process Chart – Implementation.....	E-2	MN MUTCD Guidance.....	E-14 to E-16
Sign Inventory	E-3	Regulatory Sign Usage	E-17 to E-19
Sign Inventory – Pencil & Paper.....	E-4	Warning Sign Usage	E-20 to E-23
Sign Inventory – Software.....	E-5	Guide Sign Usage	E-24 to E-26
Engineering Study Process	E-6 to E-7	Low Volume Road Sign Usage.....	E-27 to E-29
Engineering Study / MN MUTCD Guidance.....	E-8 to E-10	Which Signs are Required by the 2014 MN MUTCD?.....	E-30
Engineering Study / System Consideration Example - Rural Curves.....	E-11 to E-12	Case Study #2: Ireland vs. Lengsfeld and Carver County	E-31 to E-33
Engineering Study / System Consideration Example - Urban & Rural Low Volume.....	E-13		

Process Chart – Implementation

**** A key premise underlying all of the guidance in the MN MUTCD is the exercise of Engineering Judgment! ****



Sign Inventory

- The first step in the Implementation process involves documenting the location, type, installation date, sheeting type, direction facing, sign post type, and condition of all the signs along your system – conduct a Sign Inventory.
 - There are 2 basic approaches:
 - Pencil & Paper
 - Commercially available software
- Both approaches require investing time and resources:
 - Time in the field collecting data
 - Time in the office analyzing data
- Which approach is best for your agency?
 - Probably depends on how many signs are in your system – if you only manage a small system with relatively few signs, it probably wouldn't be worth the expense associated with buying software, attending training, and spending time in the field.



- These are examples of traffic sign inspection sheets that would be used to conduct the field inventory of sign location, type and condition.
- The inventory sheets can be linked with GIS to create system sign maps.
- Data can be entered directly into spreadsheets in the field or back at the office



Sign Inventory – Software

- There are many sign management software options available
- A free version can be found at:
 - Signs Plugin offered by Utah LTAP www.utahltap.org/software



Object Marker Data Entry and/or Edit Screen (Sign and Post Details)

MUTCD Code - Dist. Facing: **North**

Date Installed - Color: **Black/Yellow**

Age(Years) - Service Life(Years): **1.000**

Side of Road/St: **5**

Width - Height - Sq. Ft.: **12 36 3.0**

Overall Sign Cond.: **Excellent**

Reflective Material Type: **Eng. Grade**

Reflective Value (Observed): **Good**

Min. Measured Elec. Refl. Values: **50 55**

Date Reflectivity Investigated: **/ /**

Post Type - Size: **Square Tube 0.00**

Post Condition: **Excellent**

Distance From - Above Rdwy.: **0.00**

Remarks (North Facing Signs):

Remarks (South Facing Signs):

Remarks (East Facing Signs):

Remarks (West Facing Signs):

No. of Reg., Warn., And Guide Sign Posts by Cond - All Posts, All Routes

There are:

241	Posts In Excellent Condition
45	In Good Condition
14	In Fair Condition
5	In Poor Condition
0	Post Condition Is Improperly Coded
305	Total Number of Posts

[Click to Perform The Calculations](#) [View/Print the Form](#) [Close Form](#)

Engineering Study Process (1/2)

The MN MUTCD defines an Engineering Study as:

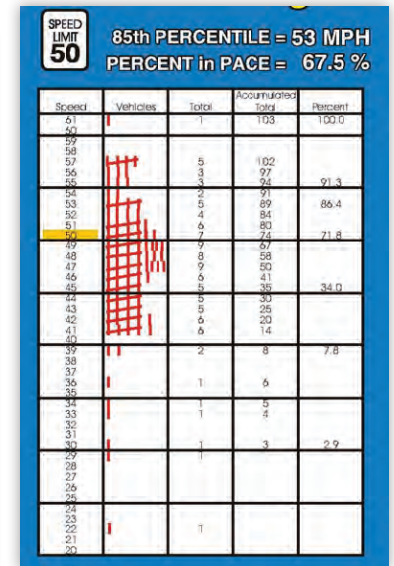
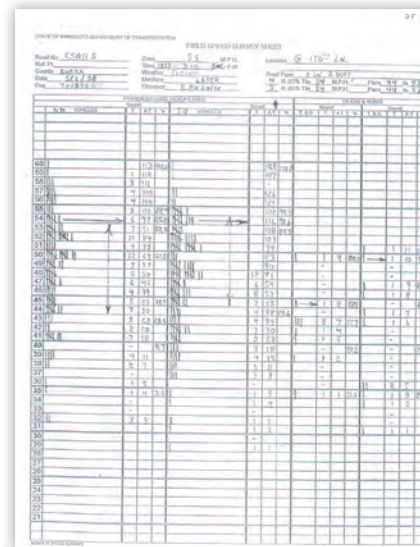
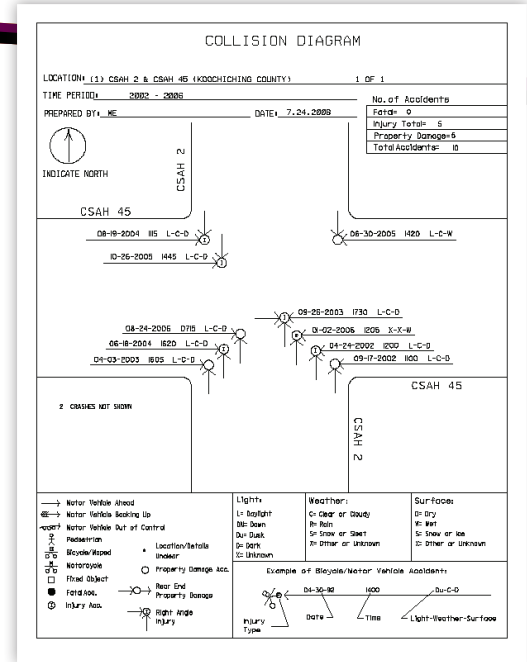
- The comprehensive analysis and evaluation of available information.
- The application of Principles, Standards and Guidance and practices contained in this Manual.
- For the purpose of making a decision about the application, design, operation or installation of a traffic control device.

The MN MUTCD also defines the requirements for individuals that are assigned the task of conducting the Engineering Study as:

- An engineer or staff working under the supervision of an e
- Having knowledge of the procedures, policies and criteria established by the engineer.

These definitions clearly indicate:

- Trained professional staff should be making the decisions about the application and design of traffic control devices (as opposed to elected officials).
- The key steps in the study process include: understanding MN MUTCD basics, location/system characteristics, agency policies, and obtaining and evaluating information.



Engineering Study Process (2/2)

Understand Basic MN MUTCD Guidance:

- Objective's of Traffic Control Devices
- Requirements to be Effective
- Engineering Study Process Usage
- Effectiveness

Understand:

- Specific Location Characteristics
- System Characteristics
- Agency Policies



Decide/Document:

- What is the Problem/Issue to be addressed?
 - Safety
 - Speed
 - Congestion
- Identify the applicable Guidelines
 - MN MUTCD
 - AASHTO
 - MnDOT
 - Local Agency
- Identify possible Alternatives
 - In virtually ALL cases there will be multiple choices
- Identify the evaluating Criteria
 - Effectiveness
 - Cost (first and ongoing maintenance)
 - Potential Impacts
 - Consistency
- Implementation

Engineering Study / MN MUTCD Guidance (1/3)



- **STANDARD:** The MN MUTCD describes the application of traffic control devices, but is not a legal requirement for their installation.
- The MN MUTCD provides Standards, Guidance, Options and Support for the design and application of traffic control devices. – It is NOT a substitute for engineering judgment.
- The MN MUTCD previously recommended that agencies **should** establish a process to provide and maintain reasonable nighttime sign visibility and legibility.
 1. **STANDARD** - a statement of required practice and the verb **SHALL** is used.
 2. **GUIDANCE** - a statement of recommended practice with deviations allowed based on engineering judgement. The verb **SHOULD** is used.
 3. **OPTION** - a statement of practice that is permissive. The verb **MAY** is used.

Engineering Study / MN MUTCD Guidance (2/3)



■ Purpose of Traffic Control Devices:

- Notify road users of regulations
- Provide warning and guidance needed for safe, uniform and efficient operation
- Any message not related to traffic control is prohibited

■ Basic Requirements of Effective Traffic Control Devices:

- Fulfill a need
- Command attention
- Convey a clear, simple message
- Command respect
- Give adequate time to respond

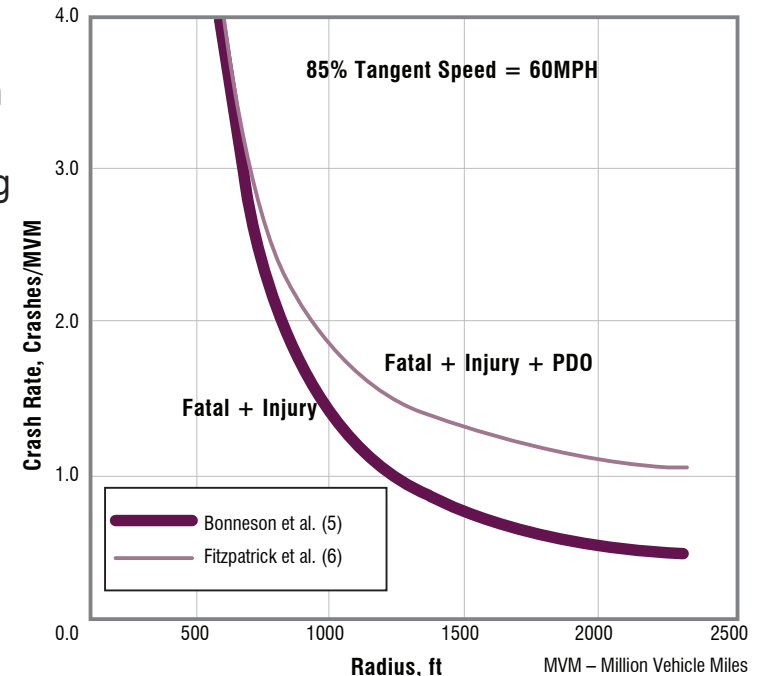
Engineering Study / MN MUTCD Guidance (3/3)



- Use only standard signs and place signs only when judgment or studies indicate a need for the signs.
- REGULATORY signs give notice of traffic laws or regulations.
- WARNING signs give notice of situations that are not self-evident
- GUIDE signs provide information as to highway routes, directions, destinations, distances, services and points of interest.
- Signs are ordinarily not needed to confirm rules of the road or laws.
- Signs should not be installed that are not consistent with the rules (for example, Speed Limit 20 MPH).

Engineering Study / System Consideration Example - Rural Curves (1/2)

- On **Rural** roads a typical system consideration involves the use of Curve Warning signs. These signs are only required on roads with 1,000 or greater AADT and a recent MnDOT research project¹ found that about 80% of the curves in the sample selected for analysis had these signs in place. However, the usage was found to be inconsistent—some curves in each of the radius categories (0-500 feet, 500-1,000 feet, etc.) did not have the advance warning signs. It doesn't appear that any particular set of criteria or strategy was used to identify at-risk curves.
- The MnDOT report also noted that the Curve Warning signs appeared to have only a small effect on crashes and then only on curves in a fairly narrow range of radii. The Advance Warning signs at curves with radii between approximately 1,000 and 1,800 feet and chevrons at very short radius curves (be careful—very small sample size) appear to be effective.
- The information in MnDOT's report combined with the results from a Texas Transportation Institute Report² suggest a possible new approach to systematically deploying Warning signs at horizontal curves. Both reports indicate that the crash risk at curves is a function of radius—long radius curves have crash rates similar to the system average for rural roads, but as the radius decreases the crash rate increases.



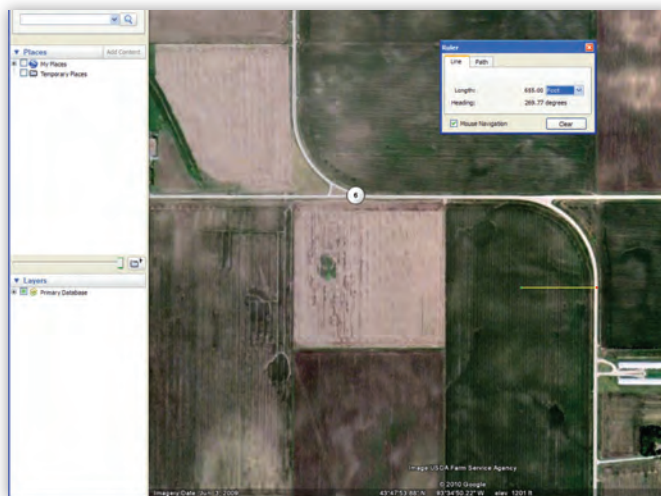
¹ Pitale, J., Shankwitz, C., Preston, H., Barry, M. Benefit/Cost Analysis of In-Vehicle Technologies and Infrastructure Modifications as a Means to Prevent Crashes Along Curves and Shoulders, Mn/DOT, December 2009

² Texas Transportation Institute (FHWA/TX-07/0-5439-1)

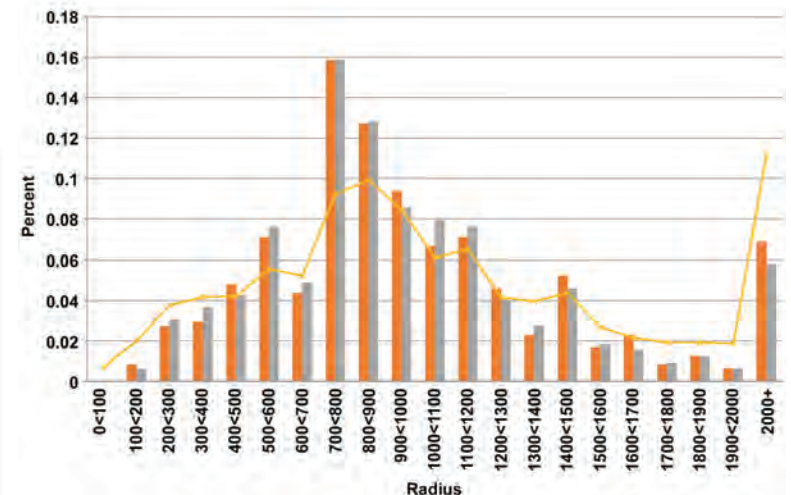
Engineering Study / System Consideration Example - Rural Curves (2/2)

- The Minnesota County Road Safety Program analyzed 18,959 curves
 - Of these curves, 63% of severe crashes occurred in curve radii between 500 and 1200 feet.
 - 65% of severe runoff road crashes occurred between 500 and 1200 feet.
- A sample system curve warning policy could include:
 - Curves > 1,200 foot radius (low crash risk/at system average crash rate) → No advance warning signs
 - Curves between 500 and 1,200 foot radii (High crash risk) → Advance warning sign and Chevrons
 - Curves < 500 foot radius (Low crash risk) → Advance warning signs and Arrow Board
- To support **ANY** system wide approach to consistently sign curves, an inventory of your curves is required including estimating either the radius or degree of curvature (Radius = 5729.6/Degree of Curve).

- It is **NOT** necessary to have a precise measurement of the radius of every curve - the curve research in Minnesota estimated curve radii using measurements from aerial photography. Other methods could include using as-built plans, county maps, information for a county surveyor or the measuring feature on Google Earth.



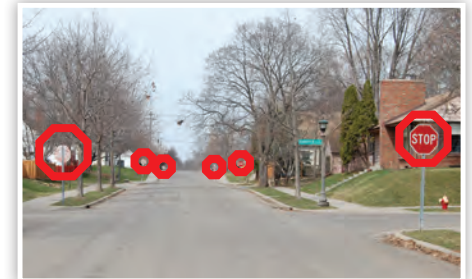
Greater Minnesota Curve Radius



- Severe Crashes (480 crashes)
- Severe Run Off Road Crashes (328 crashes)
- Total Curves (18,959 curves)

Engineering Study / System Consideration Example - Urban & Rural Low Volume

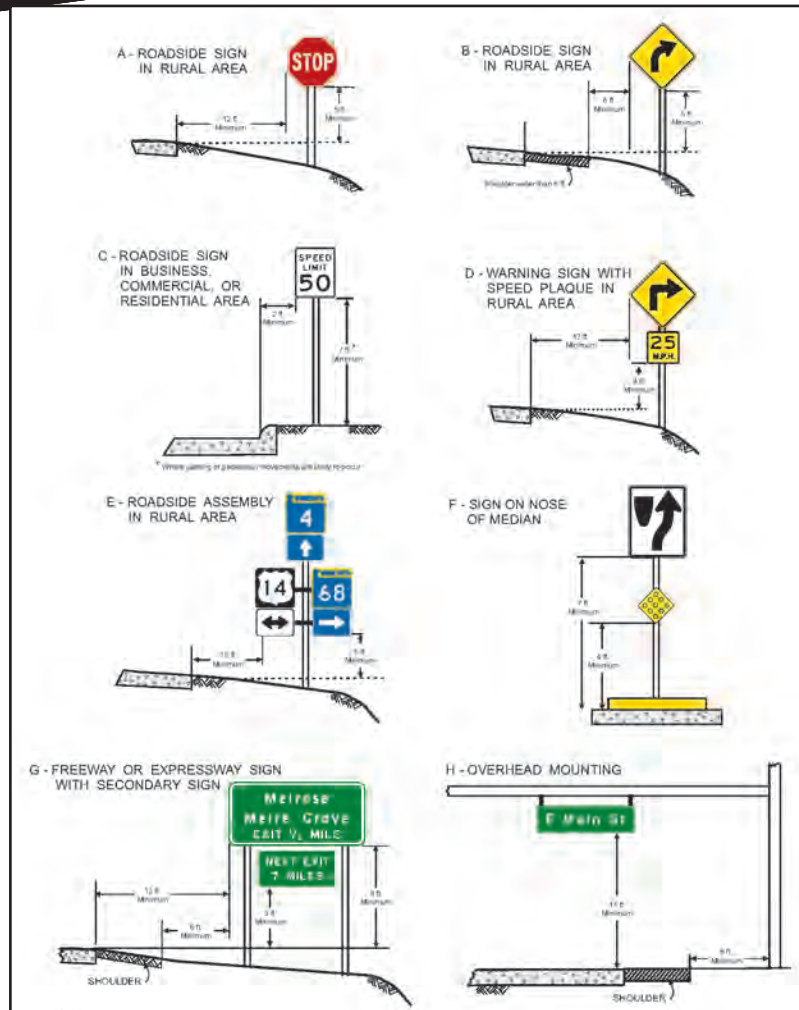
- On urban and rural low volume roads, a typical system consideration involves the use of STOP signs, particularly at low volume residential intersections.
- A casual drive around the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area reveals that STOP signs are regularly used at low volume intersections where there is rarely a need to actually stop.
- This overuse of STOP signs is likely contributing to the fact that only around 20% of the people actually stop.
- Studies of low volume intersections by Texas Transportation Institute¹ and Iowa State University² found that increasing levels of intersection control at these **low volume** locations does **NOT** improve safety.
- The MN MUTCD also advises against using STOP signs for speed control—because there is no proof of effectiveness.
- It appears that the bottom line relative to the use of STOP signs at low volume intersections is:
 - STOP signs are not required
 - STOP signs are not a safety device
 - STOP signs have been deployed at many locations where we do not mean stop and as a result only about 20% of drivers actually stop
- All of this suggests developing a systemwide STOP sign policy that:
 - Limits the deployment to locations where your judgment indicates that there is a need to stop (residential streets intersecting with collectors, collectors with minor arterials, etc.).
 - Prohibits the deployment (or calls for the removal of existing STOP signs) at locations where there is no need to stop (low volume residential intersections).
- The research clearly indicates that at low volume intersections, there are **NO** safety benefits associated with increasing the level of intersection control; uncontrolled intersections have the lowest frequency of crashes and the highest function of intersections with no crashes.
- If your agency is uncomfortable with the notion of uncontrolled intersections, consider the use of YIELD signs—compared to STOP signs they have a lower crash frequency, a higher fraction of intersections without crashes and would be more consistent with actual driver behavior.



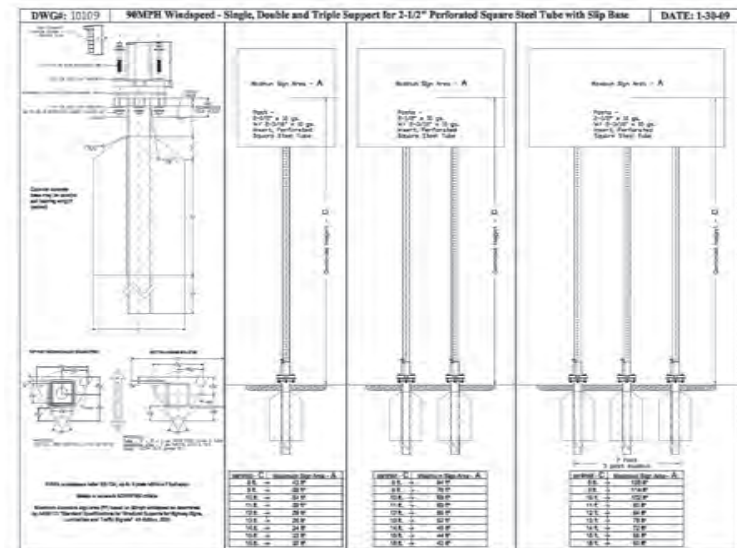
¹ Stockton, W., Brockett, R. and Mounce, J., *Stop, Yield, and No Control at Intersections. Final Report FHWA/RD-81-084. FHWA, US Department of Transportation, June 1981.*

² *Guidelines for Removal of Traffic Control Devices in Rural Areas, Center for Transportation Research and Education and Iowa State University, October 2005.*

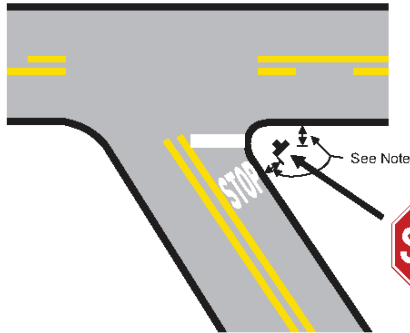
MN MUTCD Guidance (1/3)



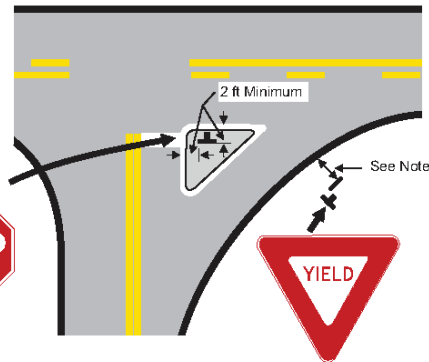
- The MN MUTCD identifies suggested sign mounting heights and lateral offsets.
- These are suggestions - but, be careful! Some experts have been known to say that these are standards that **must** be followed.
- Ground-mounted sign supports shall be breakaway, yielding, or shielded with a longitudinal barrier or crash cushion if within the clear zone.
 - Three (3) pound U-posts, Wood posts with drilled holes and the square post detail below are considered breakaway and have been tested for crashworthiness.
- Do you know how your signs measure up?



MN MUTCD Guidance (2/3)



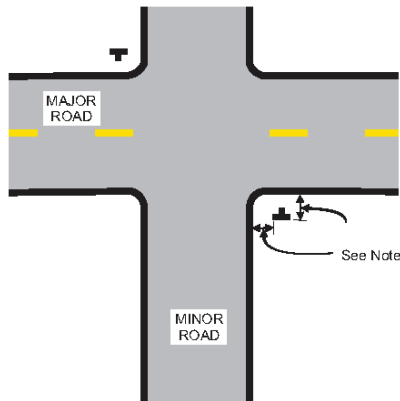
A - ACUTE ANGLE INTERSECTION



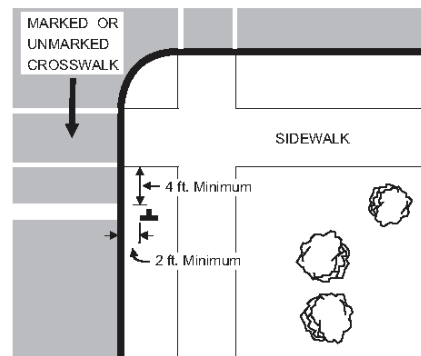
B - CHANNELIZED INTERSECTION

- The MN MUTCD also includes examples for locations for signs at intersections.

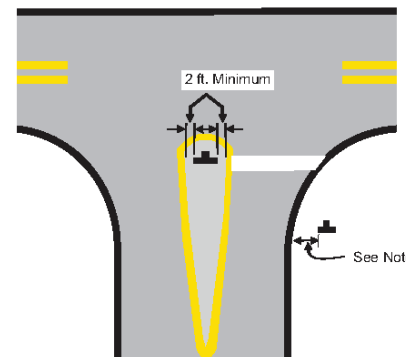
Note: Lateral offset is a minimum of 6 feet measured from the edge of the shoulder, or 12 feet measured from the edge of the traveled way. See Section 2A.19 for lower minimums that may be used in urban areas, or where lateral offset space is limited.



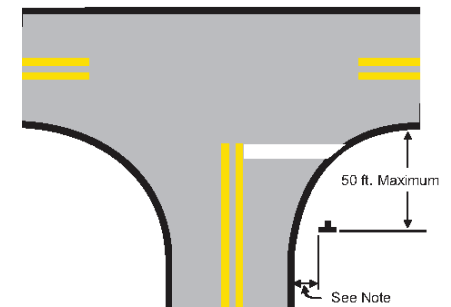
C - MINOR CROSSROAD



D - URBAN INTERSECTION



E - DIVISIONAL ISLAND



F - WIDE THROAT INTERSECTION

Source: 2014 MN MUTCD

MN MUTCD Guidance (3/3)

Table 2C-4. Guidelines for Advance Placement of Warning Signs







Posted or 85th percentile speed mph (mph)	Condition A: Speed Reduction and Lane Changing in Heavy Traffic ² (feet)	Advance Placement Distance ¹							
		Condition B: Deceleration to the listed advisory speed (MPH) for the condition							
		0 ³ (feet)	10 ⁴ (feet)	20 ⁴ (feet)	30 ⁴ (feet)	40 ⁴ (feet)	50 ⁴ (feet)	60 ⁴ (feet)	70 ⁴ (feet)
20	225	100 ⁶	See Notes ⁵	—	—	—	—	—	—
25	325	100 ⁶	See Notes ⁵	See Notes ⁵	—	—	—	—	—
30	460	100 ⁶	See Notes ⁵	See Notes ⁵	—	—	—	—	—
35	565	100 ⁶	See Notes ⁵	See Notes ⁵	See Notes ⁵	—	—	—	—
40	670	125	100 ⁶	100 ⁶	See Notes ⁵	—	—	—	—
45	775	175	125	100 ⁶	100 ⁶	See Notes ⁵	—	—	—
50	885	250	200	175	125	100 ⁶	—	—	—
55	990	325	275	225	200	125	See Notes ⁵	—	—
60	1100	400	350	325	275	200	100 ⁶	—	—
65	1200	475	450	400	350	275	200	100 ⁶	—
70	1250	550	525	500	450	375	275	150	—
75	1350	650	625	600	550	475	375	250	100 ⁶

Notes:

- The distances are adjusted for a sign legibility distance of 180 ft for Condition A. The distances for Condition B have been adjusted for a sign legibility distance of 250 feet, which is the appropriate for an alignment warning symbol sign. For Condition A and B, warning signs with less than 6-inch legend or more than 4 words, a minimum of 100 feet should be added to the advance placement distance to provide adequate legibility of the warning sign.
- Typical conditions are locations where the road user might use extra time to adjust speed and change lanes in heavy traffic because of a complex driving situation. Typical signs are Merge and Right Lane Ends. The distances are determined by providing the driver a PRT of 14.0 to 14.5 seconds for vehicle maneuvers (2004 AASHTO Policy, Exhibit 3-3, Decision Sight Distance, Avoidance Maneuver E) minus the legibility distance of 180 feet for the appropriate sign.
- Typical condition is the warning of a potential stop situation. Typical signs are Stop Ahead, Yield Ahead, Signal Ahead and Intersection Warning signs. The distances are based on the 2004 AASHTO Policy, Exhibit 3-1, Stopping Sight Distance, providing a PRT of 2.5 seconds, a deceleration rate of 11.2 ft/second², minus the sign legibility distance of 180 ft.
- Typical conditions are locations where the road user must decrease speed to maneuver through the warned condition. Typical signs are Turn, Curve, Reverse Turn, or Reverse Curve. The distance is determined by providing a 2.5 second PRT, a vehicle deceleration of 10 feet/second², minus the sign legibility distance of 250 ft.
- No suggested distances are provided for these speeds, as placement location is dependent on site conditions and other signing. An alignment warning sign may be placed anywhere from the point of curvature up to 100 feet in advance of the curve. However, the alignment warning sign should be installed in advance of the curve and at least 100 feet from any other sign.
- The minimum advance placement distance is listed as 100 feet to provide adequate spacing between signs.

- This table provides guidelines for the advance placement of Warning signs. The basic premise is to place Warning signs so that the drivers have sufficient time to understand the message and react.
- For example;
 - If you are on a 65 mph rural expressway and want to place a Curve Warning sign in advance of a 50 mph curve - the suggested distance is 200 feet.
 - If you are on a 55 mph rural two-lane and want to place a STOP AHEAD sign - the suggested distance is 325 feet.
- Longer advance placement distances can be used based on engineering judgment to account for unique conditions (restricted sight lines, sign spacing, etc.) at specific locations. Risk management best practices suggest that the thought process and ultimate decision to vary from the guidance in the MN MUTCD should be documented.

Regulatory Sign Usage (1/3)

Sign Number	Sign Picture	Sign Colors	Sign Size (in. x in.)	Use
R1-1		White on Red	18x18	Bicycle Facilities
			30x30	Minimum/Single Lane
			36x36	Conventional Multi-Lane
			48x48	Conventional/Expressway Oversized
R1-2		White on Red	18	Bicycle Facilities
			30	Minimum Single Lane
			36	Conventional Multi-Lane
			48	Conventional/Expressway
R1-2a		Black on White	60	Freeway
			24x18	Minimum/Single Lane & Multi-Lane
			36x30	Conventional Expressway
R1-3		White on Red	48x36	Freeway
			18x6	Single Lane & Multi-Lane Conventional
R1-6b		Black on White and Fluorescent Yellow-Green	30x12	Oversized
			12x36	Single Lane & Multi-Lane Conventional
R2-1		Black on White	18x24	Minimum
			24x30	Single Lane Conventional
			30x36	Multi-Lane Conventional
			36x48	Oversized Expressway
			48x60	Freeway

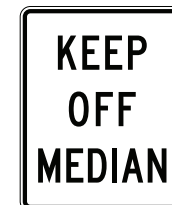
- Regulatory signs – notice of traffic laws and regulations.
- These are examples of Regulatory signs described in the MN MUTCD.
- Size varies based on facility type.
- Oversized signs are used for special occasions, such as a STOP sign placed behind an at-grade railroad crossing where the railroad hardware impedes the driver's view of the sign.

Regulatory Sign Usage (2/3)

- This is a more comprehensive list of the Regulatory signs found in Part 2B of the MN MUTCD.
- An all too frequent response to the question – why did your agency install a particular sign is – the MN MUTCD required the installation.

Part 2B - Regulatory Signs

- Road/Bridge/ Sidewalk Closed
- Pedestrian Crossing
- Speed Limits
- Pass With Care
- Do Not Enter
- All Way (Stop) Plaque
- Slower Traffic Keep Right
- Divided Highway
- Turn Prohibition
- Intersection Lane Control
- STOP & Yield
- State Law Signs
- Two-Way Left Turn Lane
- Wrong Way
- Speed Reduction
- Right/Left Turn Lane
- Weight Limits
- Cross Traffic Does Not Stop
- No Parking
- Begin/End One-Way
- Advance Intersection Lane Control
- End Speed Zone
- Keep Right
- Stop For Peds In Crosswalk
- Keep Off Median
- One Way
- Do Not Pass
- Traffic Signal(Clarifications)



Let's determine which Regulatory signs are in fact required.

Regulatory Sign Usage (3/3)

- Understand the difference in the levels of guidance provided in the MN MUTCD.

- In the category – Regulatory Signs – the only signs that are required are:

- Speed Limits (if in an established speed zone)
- ONE WAY / DO NOT ENTER
- Turn Prohibitions
- ALL-WAY STOP supplementary plaque
- STOP or YIELD* at at-grade passive railroad crossings (railroad responsibility)





- All other Regulatory signs may be used based on your agency's policies, system considerations, and the results of an engineer (or their designated representative) exercising their judgment.

- This is not an error – STOP signs are **NOT** required. The MN MUTCD states that STOP signs **SHOULD** be used based on the results of an engineering study and that one of the suggested applications should be at a street entering a “through highway.” Minnesota Statute §169.30 says that the through highway is generally the approach with the highest traffic flow. Minnesota Statute §169.30 also says that **normally** it is **desirable** to erect STOP signs at all public entrances to highways.



STANDARD (Shall)	GUIDANCE (Should)	OPTION (May)	SUPPORT
Speed Limits	Stop	Yield	No Parking
One Way Do Not Enter	Road/Bridge/ Sidewalk Closed	Slower Traffic Keep Right	End Speed Zone
Turn Prohibition	Pass With Care	Wrong Way	
All Way (Stop) Supplementary Plaque	Intersection Lane Control	Cross Traffic Does Not Stop	
Stop or Yield* at at-grade passive railroad crossings (railroad responsibility)	Two-Way Left Turn Lane	Advance Intersection Lane Control	
	Right/Left Turn Lane	Stop For Peds In Cross Walk	
	State Law Signs	Do Not Pass	
	Speed Reduction	Keep Off Median	
		Traffic Signal (Clarifications)	
		Pedestrian Crossing	
		Weight Limits	

*Determination of the need for a STOP or YIELD sign is based on a site visit with MnDOT, the railroad and road authority.

Warning Sign Usage (1/4)

Sign Number	Sign Picture	Sign Colors	Sign Size (in. x in.)	Use
W9-1		Black on Yellow	30x30	Minimum
			36x36	Single Lane & Multi-Lane Conventional/Expressway
			48x48	Freeway/Oversized
W9-2 (R or L)		Black on Yellow	30x30	Minimum
			36x36	Single Lane & Multi-Lane Conventional/Expressway
			48x48	Freeway/Oversized
W10-1		Black on Yellow	18x18	Bicycle Facilities
			24x24	Minimum
			30x30	Single Lane & Multi-Lane Conventional
			36x36	Expressway
			48x48	Oversized
W10-1a		Black on Yellow	24x12	Single Lane & Multi-Lane Conventional/Expressway

- Warning signs – call attention to unexpected conditions.
- These are examples of warning sign described in the MN MUTCD.

W10-2 (R or L)		Black on Yellow	18x18	Bicycle Facilities
			24x24	Minimum
			30x30	Minimum
			36x36	Single Lane & Multi-Lane Conventional
W10-9		Black on Yellow	48x48	Expressway
			18x18	Bicycle Facilities
			24x24	Minimum
			30x30	Minimum
			36x36	Single Lane & Multi-Lane Conventional
			48x48	Expressway

Source: MnDOT Standard Sign Summary

Warning Sign Usage (2/4)

- This is a more comprehensive list of Warning Signs found in Part 2C of the MN MUTCD.

Part 2C - Warning Signs

- Hill
- Pavement Ends
- Dead End/No Outlet
- Horizontal Alignment
- Speed Bump/Hump Road/Bridge Narrows
- Next XX Miles Distance Plaque
- One Direction Large Arrow Divided Highway
- Slippery When Wet
- Chevron Alignment
- Prepare To Stop
- Advisory Speed Plaque
- Lane Ends
- Bump/Dip
- Railroad Crossing
- Two Direction Large Arrow
- No Passing Pennant
- Soft Shoulder
- Two-Way Traffic
- Advance Traffic Control (Limited Sight Distance)
- Added Lane
- Intersection Warning
- Cross Traffic Does Not Stop
- Playground
- Merge Advance Traffic Control (General Application)
- Low Clearance (Less Than 12 In. Above Legal Max. Height)
- Crossings (Pedestrians, Bicycles, Snowmobilers, etc.)



Which Warning Signs are required?

Warning Sign Usage (3/4)

■ In the category – Warning Signs – the only signs that are required are:

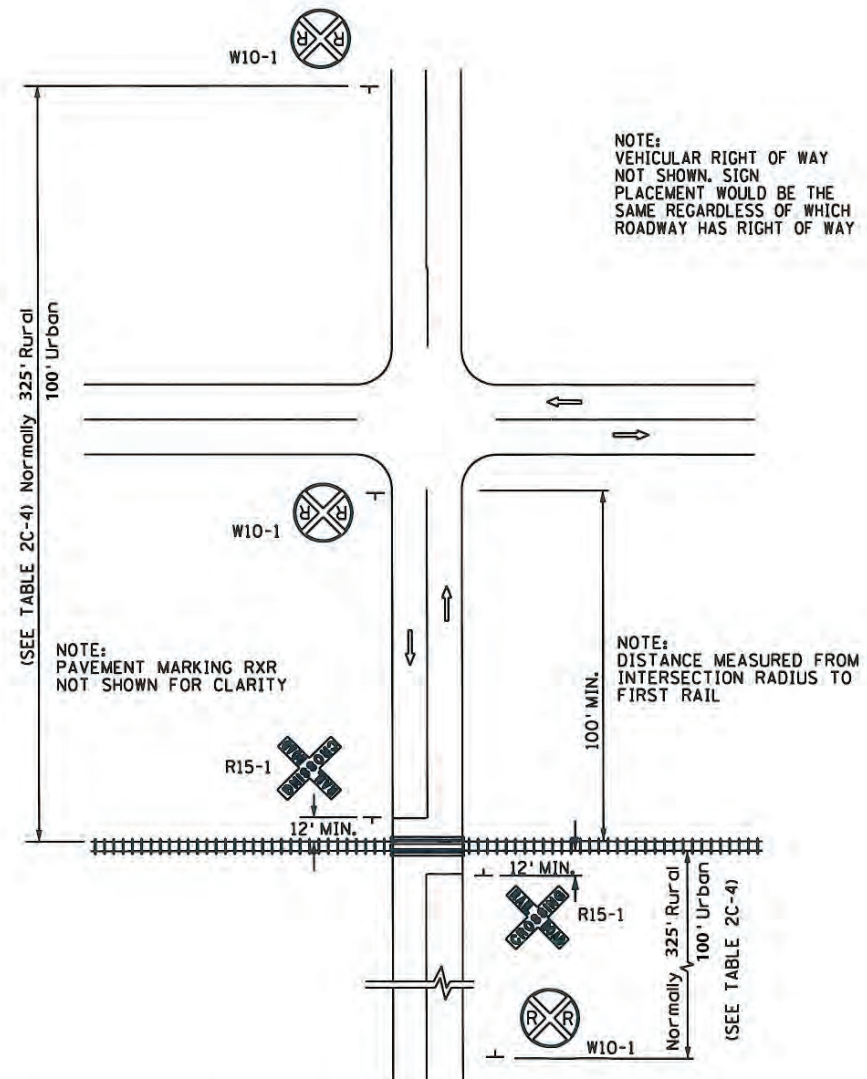
- Railroad Crossing
- Low Clearance
- Advance Traffic Control (if sight distance to the device is limited or impaired)
- No Train Horn
- Horizontal Alignment series on roads with more than 1,000 AADT

■ All other Warning signs may be used based on your agencies policies, system considerations and the results of an engineer (or their designated representative) exercising their judgment.

STANDARD (Shall)	GUIDANCE (Should)	PTION (May)
Railroad Crossing	Hill	No Passing Pennant
Low Clearance (Less Than 12 In. Above Legal Max. Height)	Road/Bridge Narrows	Horizontal Alignment
Advance Traffic Control (Limited Sight Distance)	Divided Highway	Next XX Miles Distance Plaque
No Train Horn	Bump/Dip	Advisory Speed Plaque
Horizontal Alignment series on roads with more than 1,000 AADT	Pavement Ends	One Direction Large Arrow
	Speed Bump/Hump	Chevron Alignment
	Soft Shoulder	Dead End/No Outlet
	Added Lane	Slippery When Wet
	Lane Ends	Prepare To Stop
	Two Direction Large Arrow	Crossings(Pedestrians, Bicycles, Snowmobilers, Etc)
	Two-Way Traffic	Merge
		Cross Traffic Does Not Stop
		Playground
		Intersection Warning
		Advance Traffic Control (General Application)
		Vehicular Traffic Signs

Warning Sign Usage (4/4)

- Railroad Crossing Warning signs are required by the MN MUTCD.*
- Various signs and guidelines have been established for various types of railroad crossings. A few scenarios include:
 - Parallel road is over 100 feet from crossing,
 - Parallel road is within 100 feet of crossing and intersecting road traffic must stop
 - Low ground clearance, and
 - Restricted storage distance when intersecting road must stop.
- For more information on Warning sign usage, refer to the MnDOT Office of Freight, Rail, and Waterways website:
 - www.dot.state.mn.us/ofrw/







TYPICAL SIGN PLACEMENT WHERE PARALLEL ROAD IS OVER 100 FEET FROM CROSSING

*STOP or YIELD signs at the at-grade crossing are the railroads responsibility. Determination of the need for a STOP or YIELD sign is based on a site visit with MnDOT, the railroad and road authority.

Guide Sign Usage (1/3)

- Guide signs – provide information about route numbers/names, directions, destinations and distances.
- These are examples of Guide signs described in the MN MUTCD.

Sign Number	Sign Picture	Sign Colors	Sign Size (in. x in.)	Use
M1-1		White on Red and Blue	24x24	Minimum & Conventional Road
			36x36	Oversized
M1-2		White on Green	24x24	Minimum & Conventional Road
			36x36	Oversized
M1-4		White on Black	24x24	Minimum & Conventional Road
			36x36	Oversized
M1-5		White and Gold on Blue	24x24	Minimum & Conventional Road
			36x36	Oversized

M1-6		White and Yellow on Blue	24x24	Minimum & Conventional Road
			36x36	Oversized
D1-1		White on Green	Varies x 18	Minimum & Conventional Road
D2-1		White on Green	Varies x 18	Minimum & Conventional Road

Guide Sign Usage (2/3)

- This is a more comprehensive list of Guide Signs found in Part 2E of the MN MUTCD.

Part 2E - Guide Signs

- Confirming Assemblies
- Street Names
- County Name Marker
- City Name Marker
- Junction Assembly (Jct US 63)
- Route Numbers (On All Numbered Highways)
- Destination and Distance
- Reference Location (Mile Markers)
- Advance Route Turn Assembly



Which Guide signs are required?

Guide Sign Usage (3/3)

■ In the category – Guide Signs – the only signs that are required are:

- Route Numbers (on all numbered highways)
- Junction Assembly (i.e., Jct US 63)
- Advance Route Turn Assembly

STANDARD (Shall)	GUIDANCE (Should)	OPTION (May)	SUPPORT
Route Numbers (On All Numbered Highways)	Street Names	Reference Location (Mile Markers)	Destination and Distance
Junction Assembly (Jct US 63)		City Name Marker	Confirming Assemblies
Advance Route Turn Assembly			County Name Marker

- The MN MUTCD has been changed and now requires a package of Guide signs on multi-lane conventional roads approaching an interchange. Guide signs shall be provided to identify which direction of turn is to be made and/or which specific lane to use for ramp access to each direction of a freeway or expressway. It is important to note that this change applies to both State highways and roads under local jurisdiction. MnDOT plans to install these signs as part of construction projects and will be responsible for their maintenance. As a result, there should be little or no impact on local agency sign maintenance budgets.

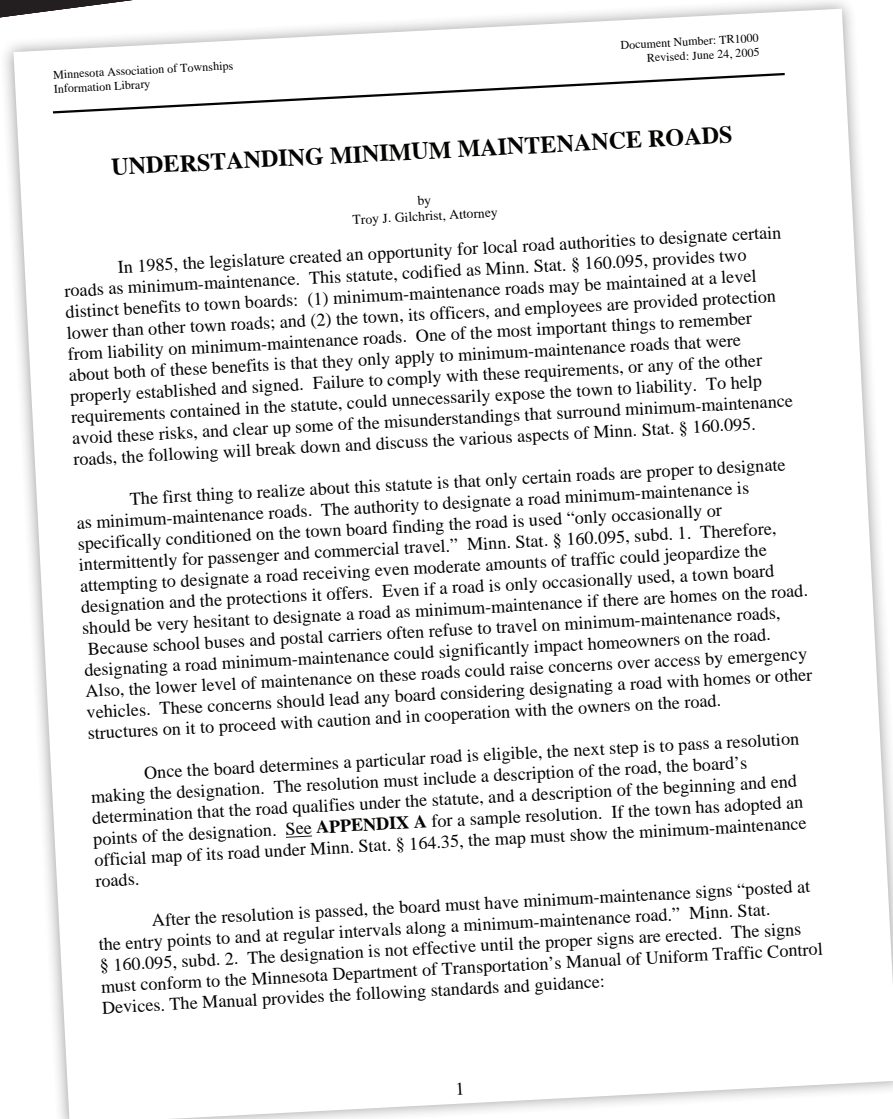
Low Volume Road Sign Usage (1/3)

- Low volume roads are defined in the Manual as:
 - Having fewer than 400 vehicles per day
 - Not being on a designated State road system
 - Being in a rural area outside of towns and cities
 - Not a neighborhood street or a freeway frontage road
- “Low Volume Roads” there are few usage requirements:
 - Only STOP or YIELD signs are required at passive railroad crossings – several should/may be used based on engineering judgment.
 - Three types of Warning signs are required – Advance Intersection Traffic Control, Rail Road Crossing signs and MINIMUM MAINTENANCE ROAD signs.

***These are the only signs
REQUIRED by the MN MUTCD.
Other signs may be used based
on Engineering Judgment.***

	STANDARD (Shall)	GUIDANCE (Should)	OPTION (May)
Regulatory Signs	STOP or YIELD at passive railroad crossing	STOP YIELD Traffic Movement Traffic Prohibition	Speed Limit No Parking
Warning Signs	STOP Ahead (Limited Sight Distance) YIELD Ahead (Limited Sight Distance) Rail Grade Crossing Rail Advance Warning MINIMUM MAINTENANCE ROAD	ONE LANE BRIDGE Crossings (vehicles)	Horizontal Alignment Intersections Narrow Bridge Hill PAVEMENT ENDS Crossings (Pedestrians) Advisory Speed Plaque DEAD END/NO OUTLET
Guide Signs	Destinations		

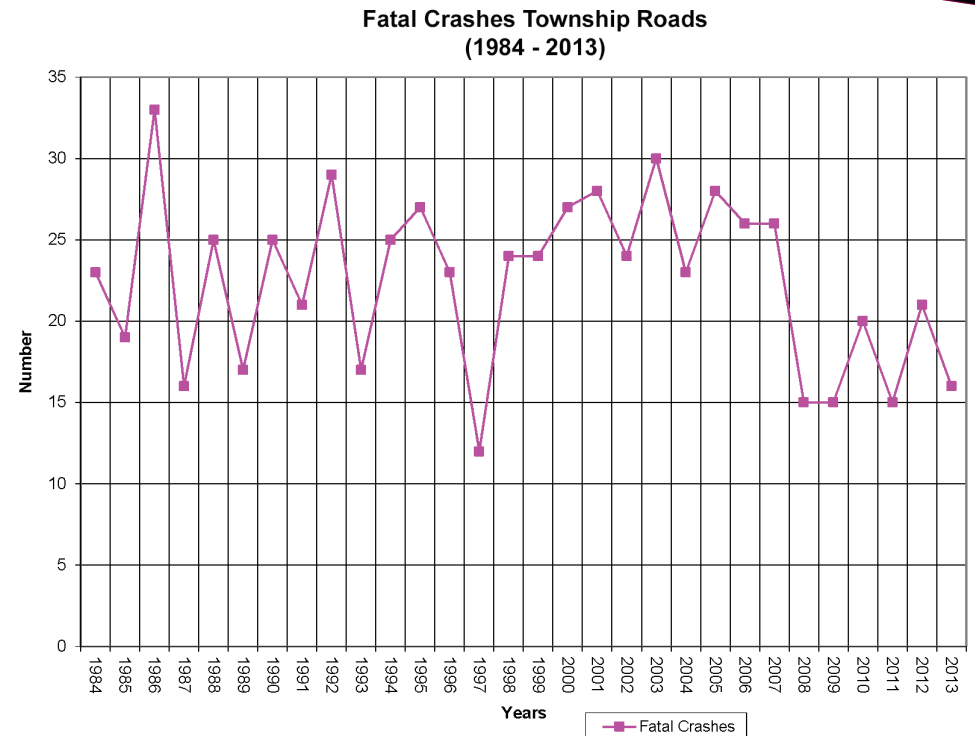
Low Volume Road Sign Usage (2/3)



- The Minnesota Legislature enacted the Statute (§ 160.095) that created Minimum Maintenance roads in 1985.
- Minimum Maintenance roads provide two benefits to Townships:
 - These roads may be maintained at a lower level than other township roads.
 - The township, its officers and employees have protection from liability on issues related these roads.
- These benefits only apply to Minimum Maintenance roads that were properly established and have the necessary signs.
- For a township to designate a road as being Minimum Maintenance, the township board must find the road to be used "only occasionally or intermittently for passenger or commercial travel."
- Roads with homes should not be considered due to concerns about access by school buses, postal carriers and emergency responders.

Low Volume Road Sign Usage (3/3)

- We have established that most township roads likely meet the definition of Low Volume Roads, as a result very few signs (see E-27) are considered required.
- We've also established that the average annual sign maintenance cost for a typical township would be approximately \$2,450 per year.
- If townships are unable to establish this level of funding in their annual budget, consideration should be given to conducting a sign inventory and study then removing signs that are not required.
- The Federal Highway Administration has suggested that sign reductions in the range of 25% should be easily achieved without any adverse effect on safety.
- The idea of sign reduction has been discussed with a number of township officials and many have been skeptical. A common response involves perceived concerns about safety – the signs were installed to address safety, if they are taken down there will be an adverse effect. In reality, the general safety effect of most signs is not well documented (See Part F) and in particular the effect on low volume township roads has never been studied. However, the graph of fatal crashes on township roads in Minnesota indicates that the long-term trend line is flat – even after the last major township signing initiative in the mid 1980's.
 - This suggests that replacing signs on low volume township roads that are primarily used by local drivers does not appear to be associated with improved safety.



Which Signs are Required by the 2014 MN MUTCD?

Regulatory



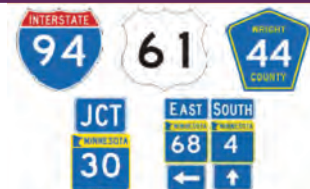
- Speed Limits **IF** a speed zone (other than a statutory limit) has been established.
- ONE-WAY & DO NOT ENTER where applicable.
- The ALL-WAY STOP plaque at All-Way Stops.
- STOP or YIELD **IF** at a passive railroad crossing
- Prohibition signs where applicable

Warning



- Rail Road Advance Warning and No Train Horn (if quiet zone established)
- Clearance **IF** clearance is less than 14'-6" (12" above the statutory minimum clearance height)
- Advance Traffic Control **IF** there is limited sight distance.
- Horizontal Alignment **IF** more than 1,000 AADT
- Minimum Maintenance

Guide

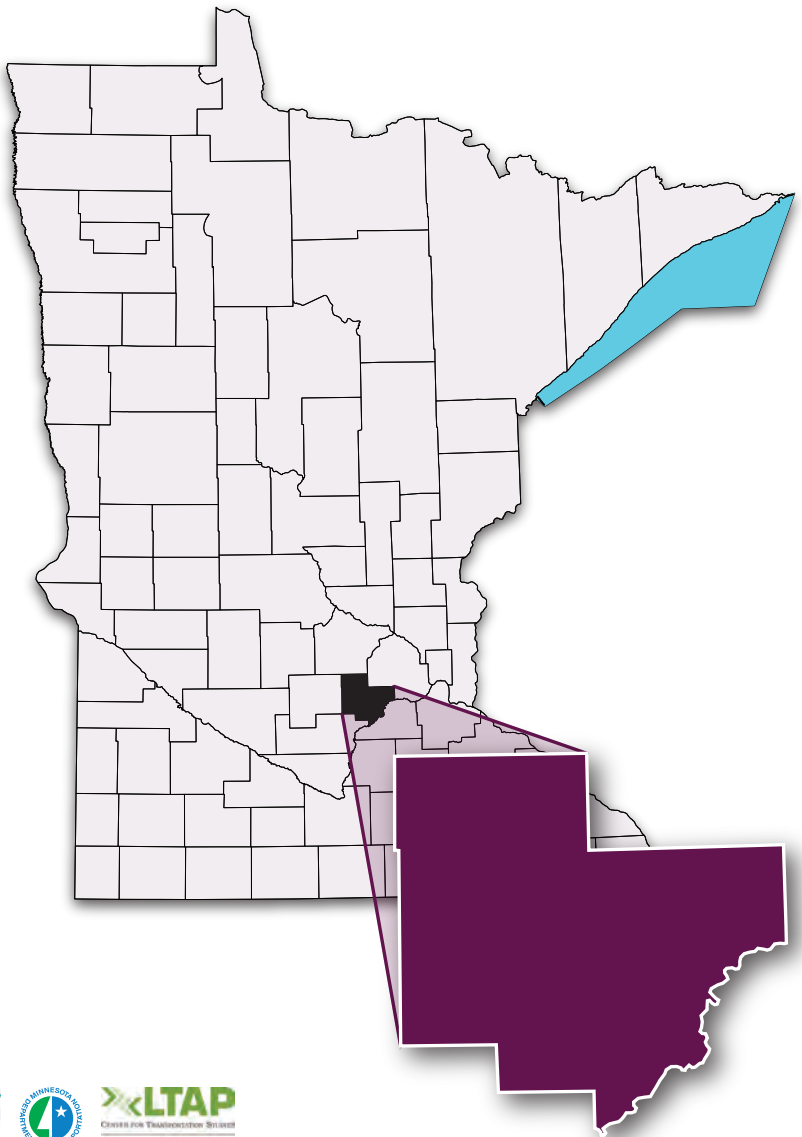


- Route Numbers on ALL numbered highways
- Junction Assembly
- Advance Route Turn Assembly

Note: The determination as to which signs in the MN MUTCD are required is based on the 2014 version. Subsequent editions may result in additions to or deletions from the list.

- If you have Low Volume roads, only the Warning signs listed above are required.
- Bottom Line – out of the hundreds of signs contained in the MN MUTCD – 15 types of signs are required.
- This suggests that if you decide to put up a sign – most of the time that action will be based on exercising your judgment and NOT on the requirements in the MN MUTCD.

Case Study #2: Ireland vs. Lengsfeld and Carver County (1/3)



Background:

- Design
- Crash History
- Issues

Lessons Learned:

- Importance of Documentation
- Application of Doctrine of Official Immunity Applied to Traffic Engineering

Case Study #2: Ireland vs. Lengsfeld and Carver County (2/3)

Background

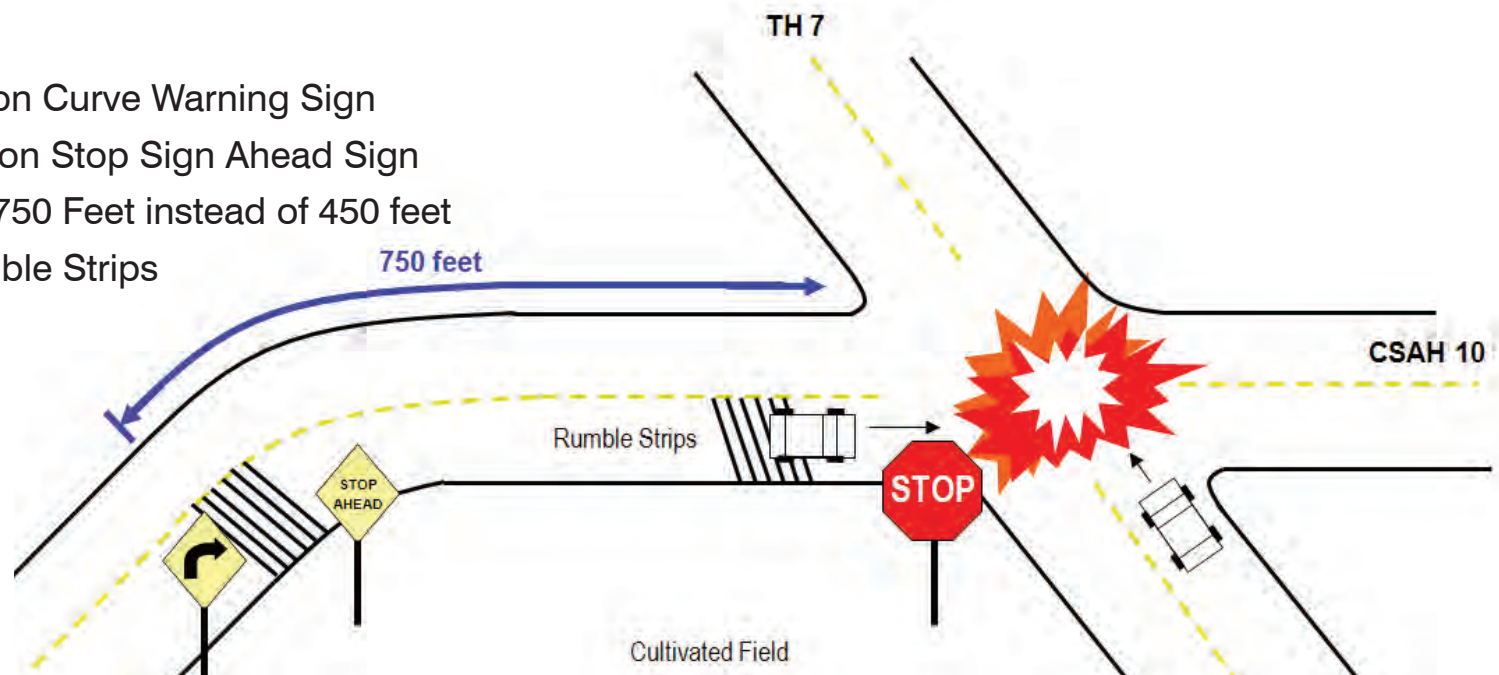
- 55 MPH Speed Limit
- Curve Warning Sign in Place
- Stop Ahead Sign in Place
- Rumble Strips in Place/Partially Filled
- Crash Occurred in the Middle of a Clear, Bright Summer Day

Crash History

- 2 Crashes per Year
- Crash Rate = 0.5 Crashes/Million Entering Vehicles
- Statewide Average = 0.6 Crashes/Million Entering Vehicles
- Critical Rate = 1.3 Crashes/Million Entering Vehicles

Issues

- No Speed Advisory on Curve Warning Sign
- No Distance Plaque on Stop Sign Ahead Sign
- Stop Ahead Sign at 750 Feet instead of 450 feet
- Maintenance of Rumble Strips



Case Study #2: Ireland vs. Lengsfeld and Carver County (3/3)

Legal Process:

1. Criminal Trial
2. Civil Case
 - County's Motion for Summary Judgement (Denied)
 - County's Appeal (Reversed District Courts Decision)
 - Plaintiffs Appeal to State Supreme Court (Refused to Hear the Case - Appeals Court Decision Stands)

Court of Appeals Decision (CX-96-19)

1. Reversed District Court Decision
 - Affirmed the sign placement was discretionary
 - Acknowledged MN MUTCD's express deference to the judgment of engineers in installing traffic control devices
 - Affirmed that rumble strip maintenance is discretionary
 - Extended the Doctrine of Official Immunity to the decision making of a traffic engineer
 - In the future, plaintiffs will have to demonstrate that the government employee engaged in willful or malicious acts

Lessons Learned → Written documentation of decisions regarding the placement of traffic signs (including a clear understanding of the guidance, facts that caused you to vary from the guidance and your ultimate decision) is a proven method for managing risk associated with actions that may not be entirely consistent with the MN MUTCD. No one expects you to document every decision you make – you will need to exercise your judgment to decide which of your decisions are potentially controversial enough to make the added investment of your time worth the effort.



What's wrong with these pictures?
(See page G-3 for answer.)



Part F – Effectiveness of Traffic Signs

How to Measure Effectiveness.....	F-2	Sign Effectiveness Summary.....	F-11
Effectiveness of Regulatory Signs – Speed Limit.....	F-3	Making the Case For Considering Sign Removal.....	F-12
Effectiveness of Regulatory Signs – STOP signs.....	F-4	Sign Removal – Which Signs Are Candidates?.....	F-13 to F-14
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Effectiveness of Warning Signs – Children at Play.....	F-6	Sign Removal – Managing Risk	F-20
Effectiveness of Warning Signs – Horizontal Alignment	F-7	A Final Thought About Sign Removal.....	F-21
Effectiveness of Warning Signs – Pedestrian Crossings	F-8	Case Study #3: City of South Lake Tahoe, CA vs. Markham	F-22 to F-23
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How to Measure Effectiveness?

Regulatory



Warning





















Guide



- In order to determine the effectiveness of signs – you have to ask what is the Performance Measure?
- The most commonly cited measure is CRASHES, but that is a very difficult piece of information to work with because only a very few signs are related to safety and there are too few crashes at most locations to produce statistically reliable results.
- It appears that a second (and possibly better) measure of effectiveness would be DRIVER BEHAVIOR. Did the sign change behavior in the desired way? Was the response consistent among drivers?

Effectiveness of Regulatory Signs – Speed Limit

Study Location	Before	After	Sign Change +/- mph	85% Before After	Change mph
T.H. 65			-10	34 34	0
T.H. 65			-10	44 45	+1
Anoka CSAH 1			-5	48 50	+2
Anoka CSAH 24			+15	49 50	+1
Anoka CR 51			+5	45 46	+1
Henn. CSAH 4			-10	52 51	-1
Nobles Ave.			+5	37 40	+3
62 nd Ave. N			-5	37 37	0
Miss. St.			+5	39 40	+1

TH 210
Baxter

	Before	After
Posted	55	45
85%	57	53
% Compliance	68	38

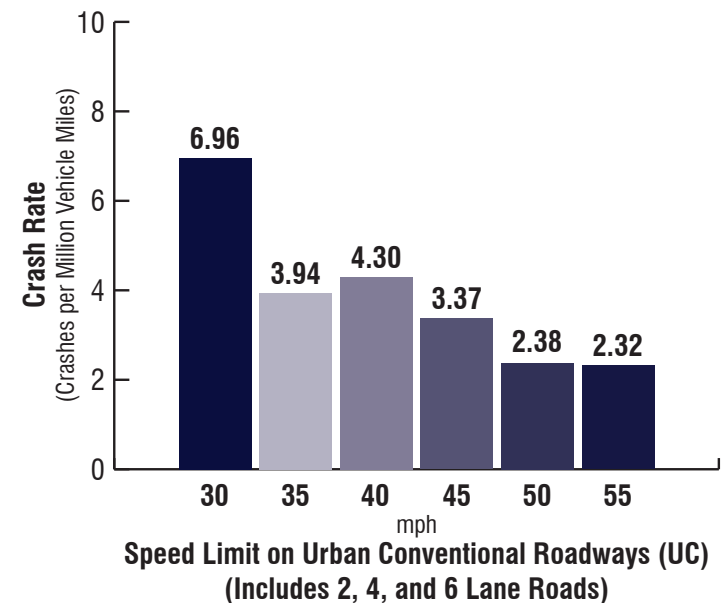
TH 316
Hastings

	Before	After
Posted	45	35
85%	47	45
% Compliance	60	12

Source: Unpublished MnDOT Data

- Drivers select a speed they perceive as safe based on their reaction to actual conditions, presence of pedestrians, road width, parked vehicles, etc.) along a roadway.
- Speed limit signs have never proven to change driver behavior.
- Drivers only comply with speed limits (and the signs) if the posted limits are consistent with a driver's perception of the road environment and their selection of a safe speed, that is approximated by the 85th percentile speed.
- Lower speed limits are frequently requested in order to improve safety. There is one very substantial problem with this theory – it is **NOT** consistent with actual crash data. Analysis of a sample of urban, conventional roads found that crash rates decreased with increased speed limits.

MN Urban Roadway Crash Rates vs. Posted Speed Limits



Source: Preston, H., Statistical Relationship Between Vehicular Crashes and Highway Access, Minnesota Department of Transportation Report No. 1998-27, August 1998.

Effectiveness of Regulatory Signs – STOP signs

- A comprehensive study of a sample of low volume rural intersections with STOP, YIELD and NO CONTROL found that the number of crashes was **NOT** related to the degree of control.¹

Summary of Significant Data¹

	Control Type			Statistical Significance
	Stop	Yields	No Control	
Number of intersections	48	48	44	—
Average Volume (vpd)				—
Major Roadway	2,530	2,380	3,800	—
Minor Roadway	200	190	120	—
Average Crashes/Int	0.44	0.42	0.32	—
Intersections w/NO Crashes	69%	83%	95%	Significant
Driver Behavior				
Voluntary Stops	19%	8%	9%	Not Significant
Slow Entries (<=5mph)	65%	79%	80%	Not Significant
Fast Entries (>=5mph)	16%	13%	11%	Not Significant

Summary of Previous Research on Driver Behavior at STOP Signs¹

Company	Morrison (1931)	Fisher (1935)	Elliot (1935)	Hanson (1960)	Leisch (1963)	Beaubien (1976)	Dyar (1977)
Full Stops	47%	45%	38%	20%	17%	22%	12%
Partial Violation (Rolling Stop)	42%	34%	42%	69%	69%	48%	60%
Full Violation (No Stop)	11%	21%	20%	11%	14%	30%	28%

¹ Stockton, Brackett and Mounce "STOP, YIELD and NO CONTROL at Intersections, Report No. FHWA/RD-81/084, 1981

² Souleyrette, Tenges, McDonald, Maze, "Guidelines for the Removal of Traffic Control Devices in Rural Areas", Iowa Highway Research Board Project TR-527, 2005

- Increasing levels of control at low volume intersections did **NOT** reduce the number of crashes.

- The fraction of intersections with **NO** crashes is inversely related to the level of control – 95% of the intersections with No Control had no crashes compared to 69% for STOP controlled intersections.

- STOP signs have proven to have only a marginal effect on driver behavior at the low volume intersections, where the need to stop (based on interacting with conflicting vehicles) may not be obvious. Fewer than 20% of vehicles voluntarily stopped at STOP signs (vs. 9% at No Control intersections) and the fraction of Fast Entries at STOP controlled intersections was 45% higher than at intersections with No Control.

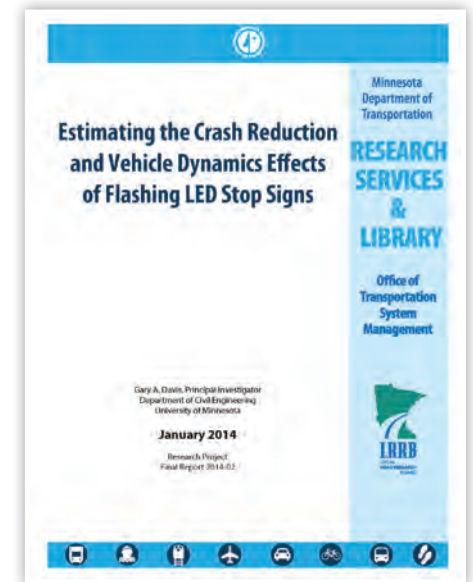
- A recent study of intersections in Iowa² found that at low volumes (less than 150 entering vehicles per day), there was no statistically significant difference between the safety performance of a STOP controlled versus an uncontrolled intersection.

- St. Louis County, MN recently added flags to an ALL-WAY STOP intersection and studied driver behavior. There was no statistical difference in STOP sign violations from before, during or after the flags were in place.



Effectiveness of Regulatory Signs – LED STOP and YIELD Signs

- MnDOT LRRB Report 2014-02 researched the impact of flashing LEDs on crash reduction and driver behavior at STOP signs.
 - 15 Minnesota locations with LED STOP signs in place for 3-years were chosen and compared to a group of 240 STOP signs without LEDs.
 - The study yielded mixed results.
 - There was a 42% decrease in right-angle crashes when LEDs were installed.
 - Drivers were much more likely to stop at LED STOP signs when there was opposing traffic present.
 - When no opposing traffic was present, no change in behavior at LED STOP signs was noted.
 - **Too few crashes made the results statistically uncertain.**
- From this research, MnDOT created a policy for when to install LED STOP or YIELD signs. Because the results of the study are inconclusive, this option is in the toolbox, but will be used in limited locations that meet at least 2 of the following criteria:
 - Limited visibility on approach to the intersection, as determined by the sight distance criteria for Warrant 1 in Section 9-4.00.0 of the Traffic Engineering Manual.
 - A history of crashes documented to be caused by a failure to stop and deemed preventable by implementation of conspicuity improvements.
 - At a rural junction of two or more high speed trunk highways to warn drivers of an unexpected crossing of another highway.
 - At a rural junction of a trunk highway and a local road which has no STOP controlled intersection within five miles.
- Local agencies could also take this criteria into account when deciding whether or not to use LED STOP or YIELD signs.



Effectiveness of Warning Signs – Children at Play

- A research synthesis prepared for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation found that there is no evidence that special Warning signs of this sort either change driver behavior or improve safety.
- MnDOT and the LRRB published research² that found no evidence that Playground Warning signs reduced vehicle travel speeds. Instead, at these locations, vehicle speeds appeared to be related to the number of cars parked along the street.
- Traffic control devices are intended to change driver behavior and improve safety – these special Warning signs have not been found to do either.



¹ Wisconsin Department of Transportation, "Effectiveness of Children at Play" Warning Signs, Transportation Synthesis Report, 201

² CTC & Associates, Impacts of Playground Warning Signs on Vehicle Speeds, Minnesota Department of Transportation Report No.

Effectiveness of Warning Signs – Horizontal Alignment

- The most frequently used Horizontal Alignment Warning signs include the Advanced Curve Warning and the Speed Advisory.
- FHWA's Desktop Reference for Crash Reduction¹ indicates that the standard Advance Curve Warning signs have been found to reduce road departure crashes by about 20 to 30% and the use of enhanced delineation (Chevrons) reduced crashes by 20 to 50%.
- A study of a sample of approximately 200 curves in Minnesota² found the crash reduction associated in the Advanced Curve Warning was limited to curves with radii between 1,000 and 1,800 feet.
- The analysis of approximately 19,000 curves along highways in Minnesota Counties (part of the MnDOT sponsored project to prepare safety plans for all counties) found that 70% of severe crashes occurred in curves with radii between 500 and 1,200 feet. This same analysis also found that longer radius curves present a much lower total crash risk and very short radius curves a much lower severe crash risk. This kind of information can be used to prioritize curves across a system and aid in the development of a system wide approach to deploy horizontal alignment signs.
- A recent study³ of the effect of enhanced delineation – Chevrons – in Connecticut and Washington found crash reductions in the range of 20-30% and a benefit/cost ratio of 8:1.

¹ Desktop Reference for Crash Reduction Factors, Report No. FHWA-SA-07-015, September 2007

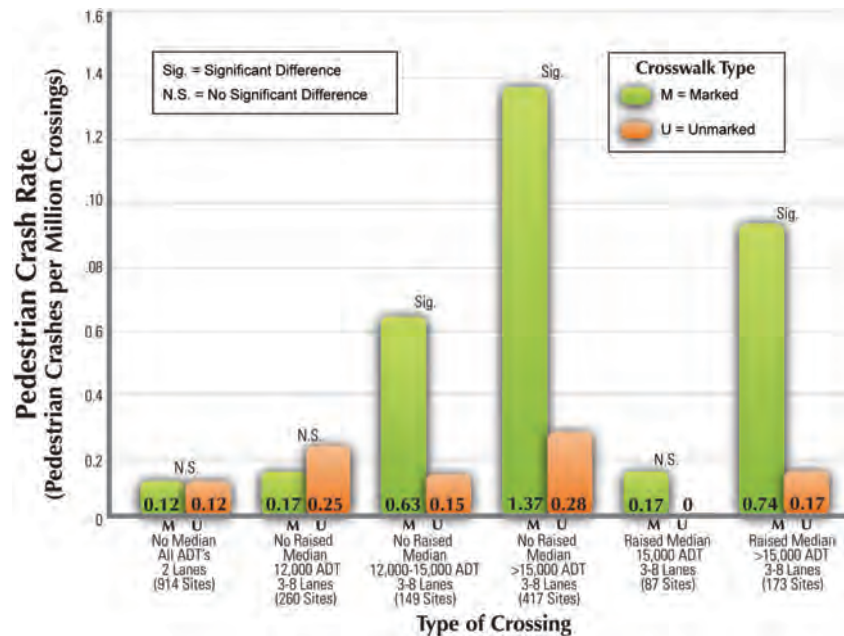
² Pitale, Shankewitz, Preston and Barry; Benefit Cost Analysis of In-Vehicle Technologies and Infrastructure Modifications to Prevent Crashes along Curves and Shoulders, Mn DOT Research Report 2008-XX, June, 2009



NEW STANDARD: In advance of horizontal curves on freeways, on expressways, and on roads with more than 1,000 AADT that are functionally classified as arterials or collectors, Horizontal Alignment Warning signs shall be used in accordance with Table 2C-5 based on the speed differential between the roadway's posted or statutory speed limit or 85th-percentile speed, whichever is higher, or the prevailing speed on the approach to the curve, and the horizontal curve's advisory speed.

³ Techbrief: Safety Evaluation of Improved Curve Delineation, FHWA Report – HRT-09-046, November, 2009

Effectiveness of Signs (Pedestrians)



- One of the most commonly requested strategies to address pedestrian safety is the installation of a marked crosswalk accompanied by Pedestrian Crossing Warning signs.
- However, the results of two recent studies indicate that marked crosswalks (with pedestrian crossing warning signs) are NOT safety devices when used at uncontrolled intersections.
- A cross-sectional study of 2,000 intersections in 30 cities across the U.S. found that marked crosswalks at uncontrolled intersections resulted in higher pedestrian crash rates¹ (than at unmarked/signalized crosswalks) and this effect is greatest for multi-lane arterials with traffic volumes over 15,000 vehicles per day.²
- A Before vs. After study at over 500 intersections in San Diego and Los Angeles found a 70% reduction in pedestrian crashes following the removal of marked crosswalks at uncontrolled intersections.³

¹ Crash rate is the frequency of crashes divided by the number of pedestrians crossing at a particular location.
² Charles V. Zegger, et al., *Safety Effects of Marked vs Unmarked Cross-Walks At Uncontrolled Locations: Executive Summary and Recommended Guidelines*, 1996-2001
³ ITE (Institute of Transportation Engineers) Journal, September 2000



Effectiveness of Warning Signs

- A search of the safety research literature found **NO** documentation of crash reductions associated with **any** other Warning signs.
- It appears the use of Warning signs is more out of fear of litigation as opposed to the strategic application of a traffic control device to solve a specific problem at a specific location.
- The most comprehensive study¹ of a Deer Crossing Warning signs found these signs did NOT either change driver behavior (reduce vehicle speeds) or reduce deer-vehicle crashes and concluded that in order to increase effectiveness, research should focus on developing a dynamic system that would provide accurate real time information.
- There appears to be a consensus among traffic engineers that static signs that warn of infrequent conditions or general possibilities – deer crossings, pavements that are slippery only when wet, rocks that may have fallen, low volume intersections and driveways with limited sight distances – are routinely ignored by drivers. This suggests that these signs would fail the effectiveness test because drivers do not choose to change their behavior based on information they determine to be either regularly wrong or of no value.
- Research^{2,3} has shown that the use of fluorescent yellow sheeting appears to improve driver recognition of Warning signs and increased legibility distances. As a result, MnDOT has adopted a practice to convert all Warning signs and yellow delineators to use fluorescent sheeting.



¹ Knapp, K., *Deer-Vehicle Crash Counter Measure Toolbox: A Decision and Choice Resource*, University of Wisconsin. Report No. DVCIC-02, June 2004

² Zwahlen, Schnell, *Visual Detection and Recognition of Fluorescent Color Targets* Transportation Research Record No. 1605, 1997

³ Schnell, Bentley, Hayes, Rick, *Legibility Distances of Fluorescent Traffic Signs*, Transportation Research Record No. 1754, 2001

Effectiveness of Guide Signs


















- The MN MUTCD suggests the use of Guide Signs – Junction, Advance Junction and Street Name to support navigation and way-finding.
- A recent study of the safety effectiveness of advanced street name signs at signalized intersections found a minimal and statistically insignificant effect on crashes.¹
- A preliminary evaluation of one rural expressway corridor in Minnesota found that upgrading the Advance Junction and street name signs from conventional to a freeway style sign resulted in a 30% reduction of right angle crashes. (Note: this is an interesting conclusion, moves the crash data in a desired direction, but is not statistically significant. The sample size is too small.)²
- Many Minnesota counties have decided to participate in the program to provide a complete set of street name signs to improve way-finding for emergency response. There is a general consensus that these signs are a high priority and an important component of an overall effort to reduce emergency response time.

¹ Safety Evaluation of Advance Street Name Signs. Federal Highway Administration. FHWA-HRT-09-030.

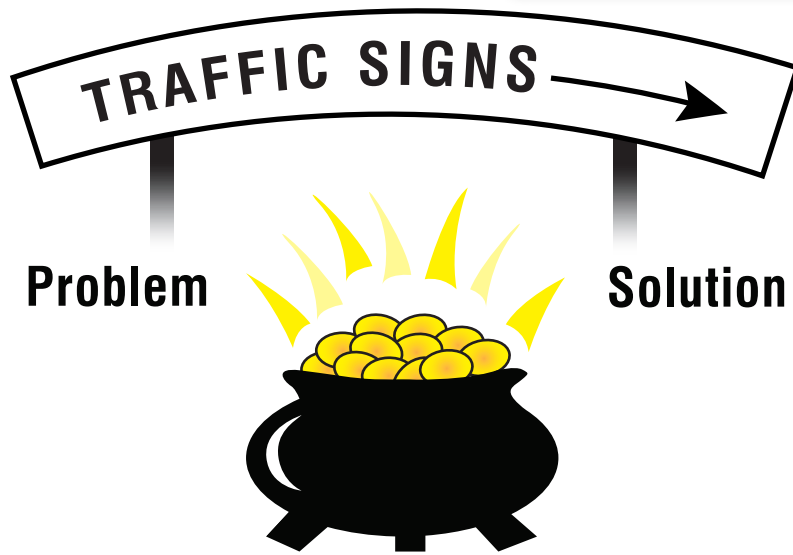
² NCHRP 15-30, Median Intersection Design for Rural High-Speed Divided Highways. Maze, T. April, 2010.

Sign Effectiveness Summary

	Signs that ARE proven to be effective	Signs that have not been tested for effectiveness	Signs that appear to be ineffective
Regulatory		 	 
Warning	 	  	   
Guide			 

- OK, which signs have been proven effective at either reducing crashes or changing driver behavior?
 - A search of the traffic safety literature found that the only types of signs that have been proven effective are the Horizontal Alignment Series (but only in a fairly narrow range of curve radii).
 - Research published by NCHRP found that pedestrian warning signs in combination with marked crosswalks at uncontrolled intersections in fact resulted in greater numbers of pedestrian crashes.
 - Guide Signs have been found to only have a minimal effect on intersection crashes but are assumed to improve way finding and navigation.
 - Bottom line – if your decision to install a sign is based on an expectation of effectiveness – either reducing crashes or changing driver behavior – the literature in support is virtually non-existent.
 - It appears that most signs fall into a category of hope - hope they do some good and an expectation that at least they don't do any harm.

Making the Case For Considering Sign Removal



- When evaluating your inventory of signs and deciding which signs should be retained versus which would be candidates for removal, consider the following issues:
 - What is the problem you are attempting to resolve and has the particular sign ever been effective at either changing driver behavior or reducing crashes?
 - What is the cost of maintaining your inventory? Can you afford this?
 - Is the use of a particular sign consistent with the guidance in the MN MUTCD? For example, the MN MUTCD discourages the use of stop signs for speed control because they aren't effective.
 - Think systematically – is the usage of a type of sign consistent along all of your roads?
- If the answer to these questions are negative – not effective, can't afford to maintain the system and inconsistent – then you should give very careful consideration to removing some signs in your inventory.

Sign Removal – Which Signs Are Candidates? (1/2)



- Speed Limit signs are only effective if the limit is near the 85th percentile speed. Speed Limit signs that merely state the statutory limit are not necessary.



- STOP and YIELD signs at low volume intersections are not safety devices, uncontrolled intersections have a lower expected crash frequency.



- Turn prohibitions relying solely on signage have only proven to be effective in the presence of law enforcement – you need to ask, how often will officers be present?



- The use of Turn Lane signs are linked to helping law enforcement get convictions and snow plow drivers clearing turn lanes. Ask law enforcement how much time they devote to going after passing on the shoulder? Would a delineator be sufficient to assist the plow drivers?



- Statements of the obvious are a waste of money if there is little or no enforcement of the law.



- Research suggests that typical drivers do NOT understand the concept of "CROSS TRAFFIC". To traffic engineers "Cross Traffic" means traffic approaching from the right and left but some drivers thought that this referred to vehicles coming towards them (Crossing the highway) from the opposing minor leg approach to the intersection.

Sign Removal – Which Signs Are Candidates? (2/2)



- Static signs that warn drivers of hazardous conditions they rarely encounter quickly lose credibility and become part of the background noise that drivers tune out.



- MnDOT is removing DEER CROSSING Warning signs because they have not proven to be effective at reducing deer/vehicle collisions. (They also determined that the signs had proven ineffective at training the deer where to cross the highways.)



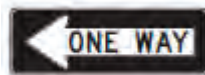
- Advance Curve Warning signs were found to be effective in only a fairly narrow range of curve radii – curves with radii between 1,000 feet and 1,800 feet. There was no safety effect in larger radius curves and in shorter radius curves it was found that a combination of Advance Curve Warning **PLUS** Chevrons was required to produce a crash reduction. Try to achieve consistency across your system. If you have curve warning signs in advance of long radius curves, those could be candidates for removal based on system wide considerations.



- A number of studies have found that marked pedestrian crosswalks and their Advance Warning signs are **NOT** safety devices when used at uncontrolled locations. Pedestrian crash rates are actually higher at marked locations.



- There is no evidence that special Warning signs of this type either change driver behavior (reduce travel speed) or improve safety.



- ONE WAY signs are not required in medians that are less than 30 feet wide if KEEP RIGHT signs are installed.

NOTE: On roads with 1,000 ADT or greater, the Horizontal Alignment sign series is required based on speed differentials.



Potential Sign Removal Examples (1/5)

If you can't think of any opportunities in your system to remove signs, consider these examples:

- The Children at Play sign isn't required (it isn't even listed in the MN MUTCD) and recent studies couldn't find any history of either crash reduction or changed driver behavior. In other words, this sign has never been observed to have a positive effect and may even contribute to making the situation worse – giving the parents a false sense of security that the sign is somehow protecting their children.
- The Keep Right and Left Turn Lane signs in this photo are along a 30 mph, multi-lane city street that has continuous street lighting. These signs aren't required. The Left Turn Lane sign is merely telling drivers what they should already know – they are in a turn only lane. The Keep Right sign might provide guidance at night (the median noses are entirely visible in daylight), however, all of the intersections have street lights. When asked why all these signs were installed, the response was – they are in the MN MNTCD (absolutely true) and State Aid would pay for them. But the local agency has to pay for ALL future costs forever.
- On the approach to this STOP sign located along a 30 mph city street, an Intersection Ahead and a STOP AHEAD sign are provided to help drivers comply with a STOP sign that is entirely visible along a road that is travelled primarily by residents that live in the area. The Intersection Ahead warning sign is not required and has never been proven effective at either reducing crashes or changing driver behavior. The STOP AHEAD sign would be required – if there was any sight restriction on the approach, which isn't the case.



Potential Sign Removal Examples (2/5)



- These signs were obstructed by tree limbs – if they are not important enough to trim the vegetation, they could be candidates for removal.



- A 30 mph Speed Limit sign was installed along this narrow, winding residential street. The sign merely restates the statutory residential speed limit and was likely installed to placate residents. However it has been proven that speed limit signs have virtually no effect on driving behavior unless the limit is consistent with the driver's perceptions of the road or there is a significant presence of law enforcement. (This city does **NOT** have a police force).



- STOP signs have been routinely installed at hundreds of low-volume residential intersections where there is no compelling reason to stop. Also, there is no proof that these signs have ever accomplished anything other than wasting fuel. STOP signs could be removed if an engineering study determined that to do so did not result in an unusual level of hazard (or if an agency is uncomfortable with right-of-way at the intersection being based on drivers exercising the rule of the right, the STOP signs could be replaced with YIELD signs).

Potential Sign Removal Examples (3/5)

- In medians that are less than 30 feet wide, ONE-WAY signs are not required if KEEP RIGHT signs are installed.
- Often times, both types of signs are installed, which is more than required.
- Agencies could reduce sign installations, especially on signal poles by installing KEEP RIGHT signs instead of ONE WAY signs.



Potential Sign Removal Examples (4/5)



- Limited sight distance signs have never been proven effective at either reducing crashes or changing driver behavior. These signs do not convey a clear, simple message and doesn't provide the driver with any guidance relative to an intended action.
- If you have any of these signs (or are ever considering installation), a better idea would involve adopting ordinances that prohibit land owners from planting trees or shrubs that impair visual sight lines at street or driveway intersections and that allow city crews to enter private property to trim landscaping in cases where there is a danger to the public.
- These examples were provided by Faribault and Eagan.

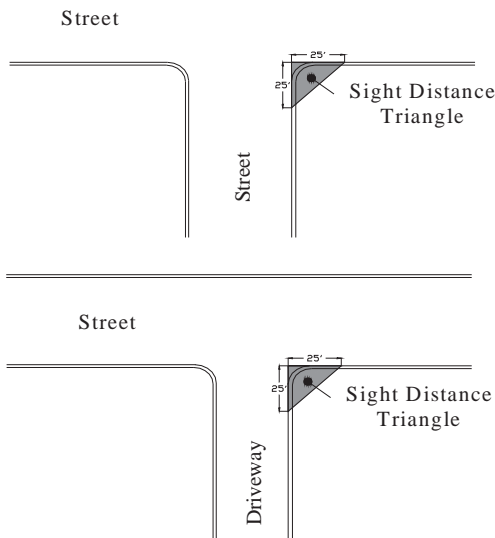
– Faribault

Information from City Code of Ordinances, Appendix B - Unified Development Regulations

Sight distance triangle. A triangular shaped portion of land established at street or driveway intersections in which nothing is erected, placed, planted, or allowed to grow in such a manner as to limit or obstruct the sight distance of motorists entering or leaving an intersection. Such triangle shall be defined beginning at the intersection of the projected curb lines of two (2) intersecting streets or at the intersection of projected curb lines where a driveway intersects a street, measured twenty-five (25) feet along each curb line and connected by a diagonal line.

Fences. (2) Any fence extending into a front building setback area, a corner side building setback area, or within a required sight distance triangle shall not exceed three (3) feet in height, except as provided under [Subsection] (3) below.

Signs. (F) *Safety obstructions.* No sign in the city shall be placed or installed that obstructs access to fire escapes or required windows, doors, exits, or standpipes. Additional, no sign shall be placed within the twenty-five (25) foot sight distance triangle required at all intersections including driveways and alleys.



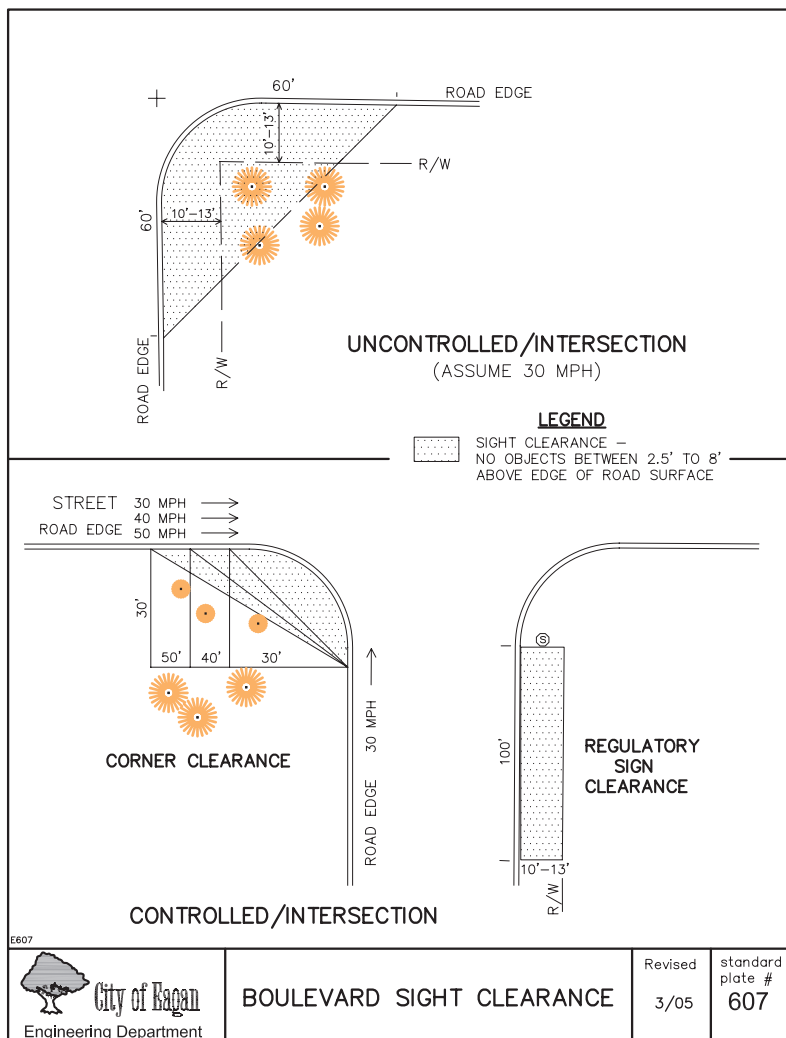
Potential Sign Removal Examples (5/5)

– Eagan

Information from City Code of Ordinances, Appendix B - Unified Development Regulations

D.4. Trees, shrubbery, and other plant material shall not be planted or maintained on public or private property in such a manner as to obscure or impede the visual sight lines required to ensure the safe and efficient circulation of vehicles and pedestrians on streets, intersections, trails, and sidewalks. Trees, shrubbery or other plant material shall not be planted as to block the visibility of any regulatory warning, or street identification sign or block the illumination of streetlights. The city shall have the authority to determine the minimal amount of required setback and clear zones in such circumstances. Property owners in violation of said requirements shall be given written notice, which notice shall be given by mail to their last known address, to remove, relocate, or trim all related plant materials in compliance with the directives given therein. If any owner or occupant fails to assume the responsibility of these requirements, the city may proceed to order the work done in accordance with subsections D.5. and D.6 of this subdivision.

E. Any tree, shrub or landscaping within a street right-of-way, which is in violation of this section, shall be trimmed or removed, as the city shall require, as to ensure elimination of any threat to public safety due to sight line or physical obstruction. The city shall have the authority to remove or trim any tree, shrub or landscaping, without first notifying the property owner, in the case where imminent public danger exists if removal or trimming is not immediately completed. It shall be the property owner's responsibility to trim, or remove when necessary, any shrub or landscaping within the street right-of-way which is in violation of this subdivision. It shall be the responsibility of the city to trim and the responsibility of the property owner to remove when trimming is not a feasible option, any tree in violation of this subdivision. The city may perform the work that is the responsibility of the property owner when the property owner has failed to do so. The city may charge the property owner the cost incurred by the city in performing any work required under this paragraph pursuant to subdivision 5 herein.



Sign Removal – Managing Risk



- Have the highest decision making body (City Council, County Commission, Township Board) adopt a policy or pass a resolution – specifying types of sheeting material you use, expected sign life, signs to be installed and those that will not (candidates for removal).
- Document the outcome of your actions relative to installing/replacing signs vs. removing signs, consistent with the direction provided by your decision making body.



- Conduct an engineering study.
- Document the applicable guidelines in the MN MUTCD.
- Document the conditions in the field.
- Document your decision.

Why Consider Removing Signs

- Maintenance Costs
- Problem → Solution Link
- Effectiveness/Ineffectiveness
- System Considerations
- Safety-Crosswalks, Unnecessary STOP signs, Children at Play – these types of signs could actually increase the number of crashes.

Process to Follow – Manage Risk

- Bring your decisions under an umbrella of immunity.
- Discretionary Immunity is generated by actions consistent with adopted policies and ordinances.
- Official Immunity is generated by exercising your engineering judgment as part of an engineering study and then documenting your actions.

A Final Thought About Sign Removal



- If you decide to include sign removal as an integral part of your comprehensive sign maintenance/management program and intend to remove a variety of signs along your roads/streets - consider two public information/outreach actions.
- First, prepare a short public notice that could be run in your official paper, be distributed with newsletters or utility bills, posted on your website, etc.
- Second, if the sign removal involves intersection control (STOP or YIELD) consider the temporary placement (four weeks would be a typical duration) of Traffic Control Change Advance Warning Signs on a TYPE III barricade or a temporary support (supplement with flags to draw attention to the sign).

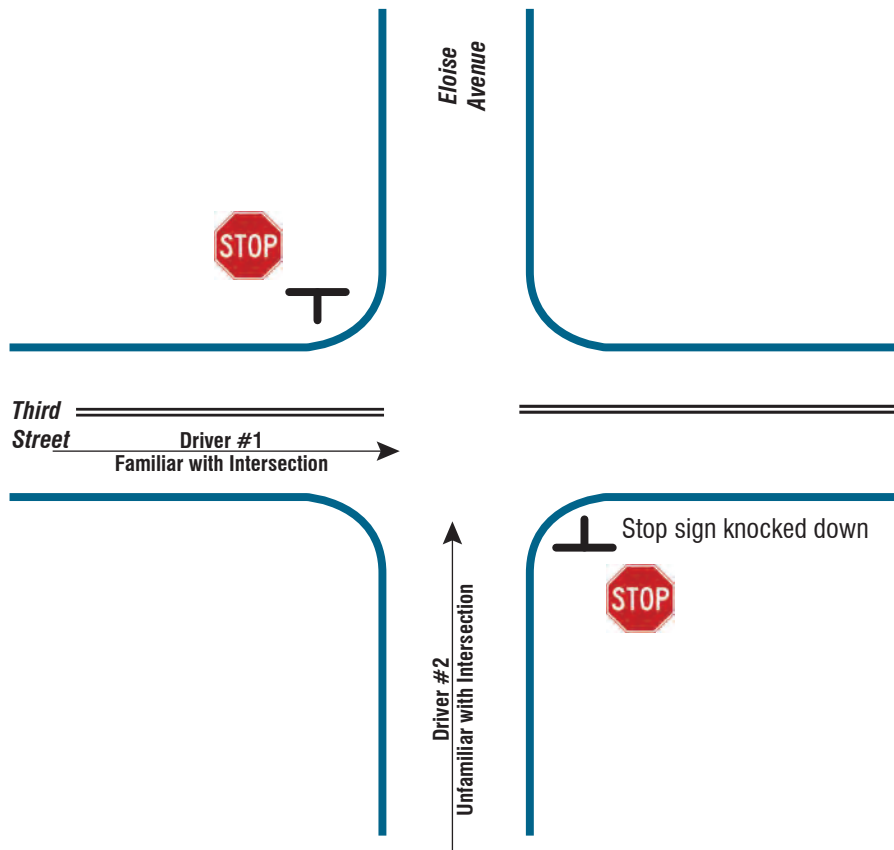


Case Study #3: City of South Lake Tahoe, CA vs. Markham (1/2)¹

Key Issue: STOP Sign Removal

Key Facts:

- The STOP sign for NB traffic on Eloise Avenue was knocked down early in the day, but no one notified the City.
- Driver #1 was traveling EB on Third Street and was familiar with the intersection knowing that EB/WB traffic had the right-of-way.
- Driver #2 was traveling NB on Eloise Avenue and was not familiar with the intersection, didn't see the STOP sign that was down, and drove into the intersection hitting driver #1.
- The City was sued by both drivers for not maintaining the STOP sign – the lack of maintenance was alleged to have caused the crash.
- There have been a number of similar cases where a STOP sign had been knocked down and the roadway agency failed to re-erect the sign in a reasonable time and a crash resulted. In these cases the key issue was NOTICE – the agency was aware of the situation and simply failed to act in a timely fashion.



¹ Souleyrette & Maze, "Guidelines for Removal of Traffic Control Devices in Rural Areas," Iowa Highway Research Board Project TR-527, October, 2005.

Case Study #3: City of South Lake Tahoe, CA vs. Markham (2/2)¹

- In this case, the City asserted that there was a very important difference → a STOP sign was NOT required and due to the very low traffic volumes the operation of the intersection without 2-way STOP control would not present a hazard.
- The California legal code contains a statutory exception where an agency has immunity from liability for injuries caused by not erecting a sign. However, once a sign is erected, there is no immunity for failure to maintain the sign.
- The California Appellate Court granted Summary Judgement and found:
 - The City had **NO** duty to provide the sign and could **NOT** be held liable if no sign had ever existed. Therefore, the City cannot become liable if the sign is removed, whatever the reason for the removal (including knocked down by another motorist). To conclude otherwise would require the court to accept the proposition that once the STOP sign was in place, it could never be removed and that motorists, particularly those on Third Street, could forever after rely on its presence. This reasoning, which is implicit in the Plaintiff's arguments, finds no support in Statute or State law.

Lesson Learned → An agency can remove a STOP sign(s) as long as the resulting intersection control does not present a hazard.

¹ Souleyrette & Maze, "Guidelines for Removal of Traffic Control Devices in Rural Areas," Iowa Highway Research Board Project TR-527, October, 2005.



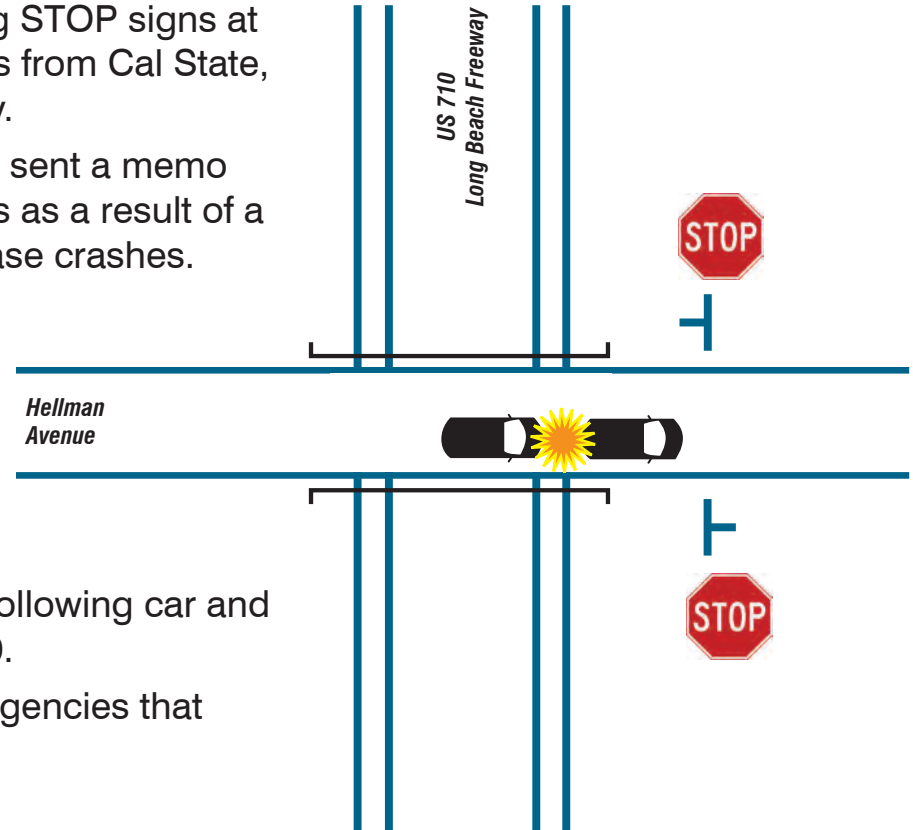
Case Study #4: Pedrosa vs. City of Alhambra, CA

Key Issue: Political Installation of STOP sign

Background:

- On September 15, 1982 a Rear End crash occurred at a mid-block STOP sign located on Hellman Avenue, just east of the Long Beach Freeway.
- The City of Alhambra, CA City Council debated installing STOP signs at the mid-block location in an effort to slow down students from Cal State, located just west of the freeway, when entering their City.
- During the City Council debate, the City Traffic Engineer sent a memo to the Council advising against installing the STOP signs as a result of a concern that the mid-block STOPs would actually increase crashes.
- The City Council decided to install the STOP signs – their desire to respond to residents complaints about students speeding through the neighborhood was more compelling than the concern for crashes.
- Following the crash, the driver of the lead vehicle sued the City and the driver of the following vehicle.
- A Pasadena Superior Court jury found the driver of the following car and the City negligent and awarded the lead driver \$810,000.

Lesson Learned → There can be real consequences for agencies that choose to disregard the advice of their professional staff.





What's wrong with this picture?
(See page G-3 for answer.)

Part G – Summary of Key Points

Key Points..... G-2 Answers to Quiz..... G-3

Key Points

- The MN MUTCD is a compilation of guidelines regarding the design and installation of signs, markings and signals. However, unlike other design guides, the MN MUTCD carries with it a higher level of authority because it has been adopted by the State for use on **ALL** roads in the State.
- BUT – do not fall into the trap of saying that the MN MUTCD made you install a particular device. The authors clearly intended all of the guidance to be filtered through **YOUR** judgment and specifically states that the MN MUTCD is **NOT** a legal requirement for the installation of anything.
- The rules regarding an agency's approach to sign maintenance have fundamentally changed. It was always a good idea to keep your signs in good shape – now it is required!
- The regulations require agencies to select a maintenance method and to engage in a program to keep levels of retroreflectivity at or above specified minimum levels.
- Compliance dates requiring all **OLD** signs to be updated are no longer valid. **HOWEVER**;
- Your agency is now “On the Clock”. You must now have a sign maintenance/management plan in place and being carried out (**COMPLIANCE DATE** of June 13, 2014). All new signs must be at or above minimum specified retroreflectivity levels.
- You are encouraged to work with your elected officials to develop a policy to guide your sign maintenance program. The policy would establish direction for your staff and support statutory discretionary immunity.
- Your agency will need to develop an implementation process – create one of your own or modify the approach identified in this guide. **But** make sure to include exercising engineering judgment and to create some kind of **written record** regarding signs to remain and signs to be removed – this supports establishing official immunity for your agencies actions.

Answers to Quiz

Part A Divider

In both photos the STOP AHEAD signs are clearly not needed – the STOP signs are completely visible. The use of these STOP AHEAD signs was likely based on a blanket practice of installing these warning signs at every intersection. Getting back to a location specific decision process would represent an opportunity to reduce an agency's inventory of signs by supporting the removal at intersections with adequate sight distance.

Part B Divider

This speed limit sign merely states the statutory speed limit for urban streets. It is entirely obvious that the area is residential. The road is narrow and curvilinear. The sign fulfills no real purpose and could be considered for removal.

Part C Divider

The STOP and YIELD signs in the photo are at the intersection of two, low-volume residential streets. These signs are not required and research shows that the use of these signs in low-volume conditions are not safety devices. These signs could be candidates for removal at this particular location and across the system.

Part D Divider

The chevron in this photo is on a city street and is approximately 100 feet from a STOP sign at a multi-lane urban arterial. The horizontal alignment series of warning signs has proven to be effective at reducing road departure crashes, but never at curves with a 60 foot radius. It appears that the chevron is being used to supplement the STOP sign, a use for which it was never intended. It appears that this sign at this location is a candidate for removal.

Part E Divider

The static Deer/Turtle Crossing Warning signs have been found to be ineffective at reducing vehicle/deer/turtle crashes. As a result, a number of agencies (including MnDOT) have identified these signs as candidates for removal (not replacing them when knocked down or removed as part of corridor-based upgrades).

Part F Divider

Watch for Children and Slow Children signs have never been proven effective at either reducing crashes or changing driver behavior. As a result, their usage does NOT result in any real improvement for either the children or drivers and could actually make matters worse by giving parents a false sense of security based on the hope that a sign can somehow replace their own responsibility to supervise their children. These types of warning signs should be considered for removal because agencies cannot afford to install signs that are ineffective.

Part G Divider

This static Intersection Warning sign has never been proven effective at improving safety. In this case, the intersection has very low volumes and drivers almost certainly live in the area, knowing that there is an intersection ahead. The low volume at the intersection suggests that the probability of a crash is low and this sign has no history of reducing crashes – it should be considered a candidate for removal.

Appendix Divider

STOP and YIELD signs at low volume intersections are not safety devices, nor should they be used for traffic calming purposes. STOP signs have a marginal effect on driver behavior at low volume intersections with fewer than 20% of vehicle voluntarily stopping.



What's wrong with this picture?
(See page G-3 for answer.)

Appendix

Example Signing Policy – Metro County	AP-2	Blind Fire Department Driveway Request	AP-6
Example Signing Policy – Cass County	AP-3	Sample Agreement-Blind Fire Department Driveway	AP-7
Sample Response to Request for SLOW CHILDREN Sign	AP-4	Why Don't They Put In More STOP SIGNS?	AP-8
Why Won't They Put Up "CHILDREN AT PLAY" Signs?	AP-5	When Will a Lower Speed Limit be Posted on My Street?	AP-9

Example Signing Policy – Metro County

Sign Maintenance Policies and Procedures
Sample Document for use by Public Agencies (Sample from County) Page 1 of 3

(Specific agency name) Transportation
Sign Maintenance Policies and Procedures – Sample Document
Adopted by (____ County) Board: Date – Resolution ____

Purpose

The purpose of the Traffic Operations Policies and Procedures is to establish and maintain uniform definitions and practices concerning sign maintenance and operations on (specific agency name) highways. The county will provide such control in a safe and cost-effective manner balancing the needs of safety for highway users and county personnel, budget, social and environmental concerns. It is in the county's best interest to have traffic operation and maintenance procedures. Because of variables in the weather, traffic issues, changing driver demographics, road design, standards and other factors, these procedures must remain flexible. The county may use county employees or other entities under contract to provide this service.

I. Procedure

The sign maintenance supervisor or designated lead worker will make decisions concerning scheduling and the procedures to be followed for daily traffic operation maintenance needs and subsequent yearly detailed condition inspections. Scheduling and the procedures to be followed will be based upon consideration of the following factors: significance of the traffic device to driver safety, condition and effectiveness of the device, standards compliance, and whether damage or condition creates an immediate safety hazard.

In every instance, the onsite Traffic Technician must assess the conditions of the traffic control device and rely on judgment and experience to determine the appropriate action to correct or maintain the device. Factors that may delay completion of traffic operation maintenance include other repair needs; utility locatee needs, fabrication of necessary material, weather conditions including severe cold or significant winds, limited visibility, and other staff and field condition issues.

II. General Practices: Subject to the factors set forth in Section II, Procedures, the county will maintain traffic control devices (signs, traffic signals and pavement markings) to ensure a safe and efficient operation. Note: This example details sign practices but, can be expanded to pertain to all traffic operation practices.

Sign Maintenance

- Sign Installation:** Signs will be installed to meet federal standards set forth in the most recent Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MnMUTCD) in accordance to (specific agency name) guidelines and practices.
- Maintain Signing, Overall Responsibility:** County sign maintenance practices are established to meet all requirements and ensure appropriate signing for the traveling public.
- Sign Retro-Reflectivity:** (Specific name) county is currently creating a field sign inventory database. Once data collection is done and the system is in place, County will utilize the database for sign management through the expected sign life practice

Sign Maintenance Policies and Procedures
Sample Document for use by Public Agencies (Sample from County) Page 2 of 3

to meet federal sign retro-reflectivity standards. Expected sign life will be conducted through a combination of review of signs that are at the sheeting warranty life and sample measurements to establish a base line life for each sign type.

Prior to completion of the database, County will utilize the Visual Inspection Method, following the general criteria of the calibrated sign procedure to conduct a nighttime inspection as outlined in the specific section below.

Once the sign management practice is fully implemented nighttime sign survey may be conducted periodically (up to every four years) to supplement the management program and monitor for sign replacement needs based on vandalism or other premature sign degradation.

- D. **Sign Maintenance Responsibility:** Maintain highway signs and street identification signs on all (specific agency name) highways, with the exception of:
- 1) All signing on approaches to county highways are not installed or maintained by the county other than street name signs and stop signs intersecting the county Highway which are maintained by the county.
 - 2) Stop signs at Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) controlled intersections and highway ramps with county highways;
 - 3) Specific signs installed by others (MnDOT, transit agencies, and Cities permitted to place signs on county highways) as outlined in the advanced signing guideline document.
 - 4) Signs along county Highway within MnDOT right of way, unless specific agreement with MnDOT stipulates a county maintenance responsibility for signing.
 - 5) Bike path and other pedestrian-control signs not pertaining to vehicle traffic.

Response to Incident Report for Sign Repair Needs: Sign maintenance staff will respond after receiving notice of a repair need to determine appropriate action with the following priorities:

- 1) Stop sign: as soon as practical, no later than one business day, a temporary stop sign will be placed if required.
- 2) Other regulatory signs: no later than three business days.
- 3) Warning signs: within one scheduled workday.
- 4) Informational/guidance signs: within two scheduled workweeks.

Visual Sign Inspection: Traffic staff will perform a night time survey as follows:

- 1) Acceptable retro reflectivity will be determined by the technicians conducting the night time inspect.
- 2) Staff will be given direction as training by the supervisor or take a night time sign inspection course if available in the area for conducting the study appropriately. The night of the inspection, staff will view each sign type mounted at the standard sign height (regulatory black/white, stop sign, warning sign and guidance sign) that are at or above minimum criteria from the standard county pick-up truck with low-beams to mimic field conditions as much as practical.

Sign Maintenance Policies and Procedures
Sample Document for use by Public Agencies (Sample from County) Page 3 of 3

- 3) Written documentation of the location, sign type, size and reason for sign replacement will be recorded for each sign that is not in an acceptable condition and needs replacement.
 - 4) Sign replacement will occur as follows:
 - a) Stop signs – within three working days
 - b) All other signs – by segment with the entire replacement program for signs identified through the survey being replaced within four months of completion of the review.
- G. **Miscellaneous Sign Practices:**

- 1) Sign staff is not directly on-call after normal working hours. After hours phone numbers for traffic operation sign staff is provided to the Communications Center (911 response) so staff can be contacted in case of an emergency. In addition, a sign maintenance and highway maintenance person is on-call at all times after normal working hours and can respond to emergency situations in case traffic operation staff cannot be contacted.
- 2) Training is provided to ensure traffic staff can perform sign maintenance duties in an efficient, effective and responsive manner. Such training shall consist of, at a minimum, appropriate signing and traffic control seminars (when available and funds are available in the county training budget), appropriate available training videos or website trainings, and yearly training by supervisors.
- 3) Unauthorized signs will be removed from county right of way consistent with the (specific agency name) Sign Placement Policy 8252.
- 4) Support staff will be informed and updated regarding sign maintenance operations (e.g., schedules and other priority needs or equipment failures) to ensure accurate information is available to respond to telephone inquiries.
- 5) Sign staff may park a sign maintenance vehicle against traffic flow in order to perform necessary emergency and routine maintenance duties.
- 6) Sign staff may drive or park maintenance vehicles on the center medians or boulevards in order to perform necessary emergency and routine maintenance duties.

Example Signing Policy – Cass County



Cass County Highway Department

8045 Co. Rd. 12, Box 579 • Walker Mn 56484 • 218-547-1211 • Fax: 218-547-1099
 David E. Ersklen, P.E.
 Cass County Highway Engineer
 Robert L. Kovanen
 County Surveyor
 Laura Hadwin
 Construction/Design Engineer
 Kris Lythum
 Asst. Engineer
 Lori Koch
 Fiscal Supervisor

CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

SIGNING POLICY

"Slow, Children at Play" Signs "Watch for Children" Signs

The Cass County Highway Department will not utilize these signs, because it is not recognized by the State of Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), the legal sign manual in the State. The reasons why these signs are not accepted by the MUTCD are:

1. These signs are unenforceable. Local law enforcement cannot write tickets based solely on these signs, unless motorists are exceeding the posted speed limit.
2. Motorists should be aware that children might be playing near all highways. To sign specific highways would imply that those highways without signs have no children nearby. If one highway is signed, all highways should be signed, which would be impractical.
3. These signs give parents and children a false sense of security.
4. There is no data to support that these signs effectively modify driver behavior.

Adopted by Cass County Board of Commissioners - May 17, 2005

Cass County Highway Department Guidance Policy Roadway Signage & Striping

Introduction

The Cass County Highway Department believes it is in the best interest of the residents of the county to assume basic responsibility for installation and maintenance of roadway signage and pavement markings on county roadways. Roadway signage and pavement markings are essential for routine travel and safety of the motoring public. The County Highway Department will provide such services in a safe and cost effective manner, keeping in mind safety, budget, personnel and environmental concerns.

Striping

The Cass County Highway Department is committed to providing and maintaining roadway markings and striping on all paved county roadways. Due to the volume of paved roadways (approximately 420 miles in 2003) and budget constraints, it is not financially feasible for the Department to re-stripe all of the roadways on an annual basis. As such, the effects of traffic volume and maintenance activities on the striping performance were reviewed. Following this review, the Department determined schedules needed to maintain an adequate stripe for different traffic counts. The re-striping schedules are as follows:

- 1) All highways with traffic counts of 1,000 vehicles per day or greater will be re-stripped annually (every year).
- 2) All highways with traffic counts greater than 500 and less than 1,000 vehicles per day will be re-stripped bi-annually (every other year).
- 3) All highways with traffic counts of less than 500 vehicles per day will be re-stripped once every five (5) years.

To gain the most effective performance of the stripe and to allow sufficient time for the striping paint to cure, it is the Departments goal that all re-striping operations that are made a part of the striping program should be completed by June 30th of each year.

Signage

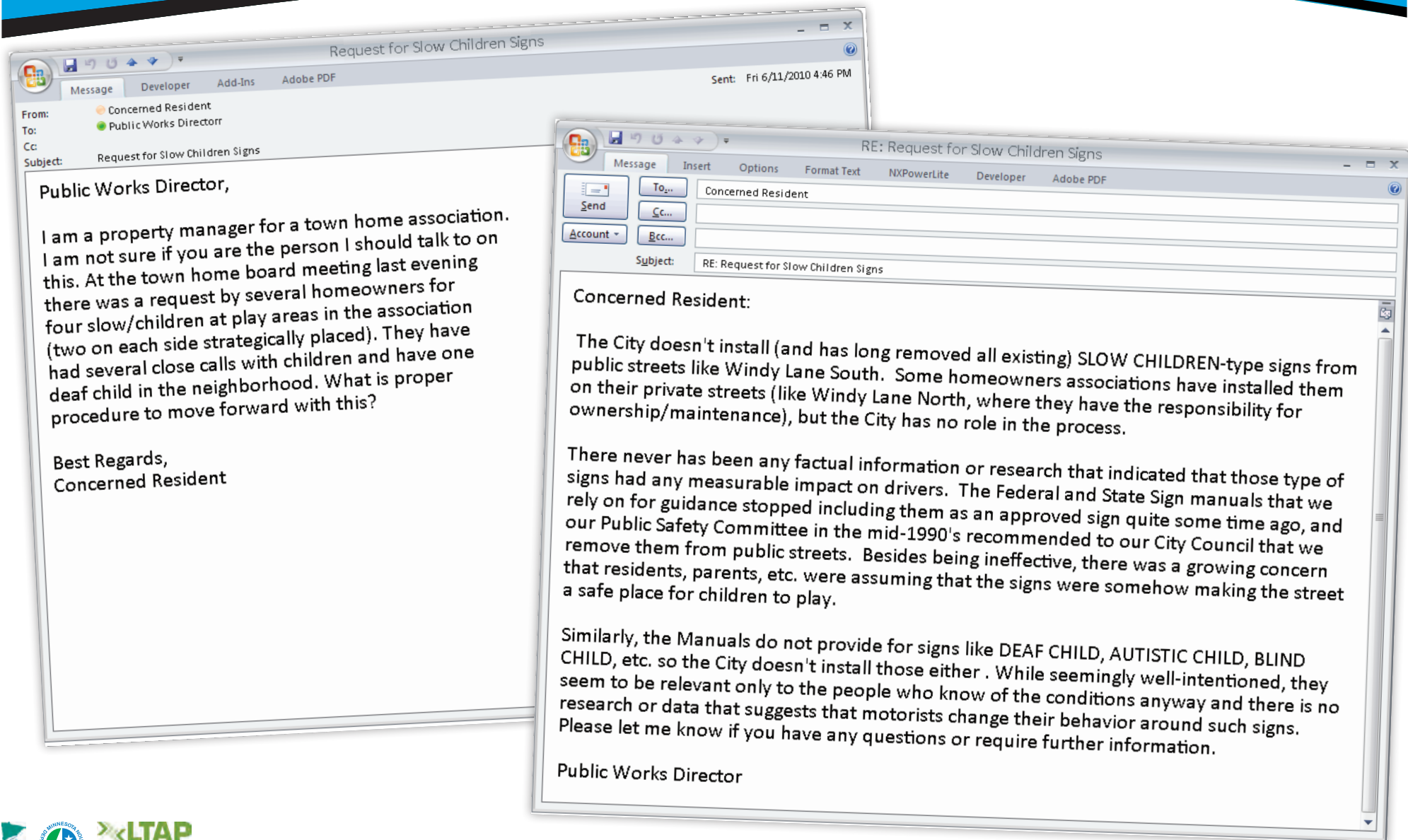
The Cass County Highway Department is committed to providing adequate signage on all County roadways. However, with the volume of roadways that the Department maintains, it is not financially feasible to sign all roadways. Because of this, it has been decided that signs will be provided only on paved roadways with some signs on gravel roads in exceptional circumstances. All signs that are deemed to be required on a roadway will be placed, constructed and maintained in accordance with the "Minnesota Manual On Uniform Traffic Control Devices" (Mn/MUTCD) that was current at the time that the sign was installed. All new signs that are placed or replaced within Cass County right-of-way should be constructed with High Intensity Diamond grade facing or higher, dependent on the Departments budget.

Sign Maintenance Practices

- 1) Recurring Maintenance Schedule - All signs that are necessary for traffic control should be placed on a recurring maintenance schedule and should be replaced on a 10 to 12 year life cycle. The Department should also conduct periodic nighttime reflectivity observations of all signs within the right-of-way in order to monitor the performance of the signs reflective qualities. These observations should also include all signs in County right-of-way that face traffic entering from local roads.
- 2) Traffic Sign Field Inventory - The Department shall develop and maintain a field inventory of all signs located within the right-of-way of all County roadways. This record of signage is vital to sign management practices and to allow budgeting costs to be determined for changes in sign maintenance policy. The information included in this inventory should include but not be limited to type and size of sign, type of reflective coating, location of the sign, and date that the sign was installed.
- 3) Missing or Damaged Signs - It is the counties responsibility to replace all missing or damaged signs on the County roadway system. Signs can become missing and/or damaged due to being stolen, involved in an accident or vandalized as well as becoming dysfunctional due to typical aging and/or weathering processes. When the sign is considered vital to the safety of the motoring public (i.e. stop signs, etc.), the sign will be replaced as soon as possible once the problem has been identified. This means that County personnel will be dispatched to repair the deficiency as soon as the Department is notified. This indicates that crews will be dispatched regardless of time of day and/or overtime. This indicates that its existence is not directly vital to maintaining the safety of the motoring public but is important to the safe and efficient use of the roadway system (i.e. speed limit signs, warning signs, etc.) it will be replaced as soon as possible during normal Department working hours, generally within three (3) business days. If the sign is of a type that its existence is not important to the general safety of the motoring public (i.e. route markers, guide signs, adopt-a-highway signs) it will be replaced as soon as practical within the Departments normal operations. All sign maintenance operations will be performed at the discretion of the Engineer and will be subject to Department budget and personnel constraints.

When the Department is contacted regarding missing or damaged signs within the right-of-way of other authorities (i.e. Mn/DOT or townships) the governing authority should be contacted to notify them of the deficiency.

Sample Response to Request for SLOW CHILDREN Sign



Why Won't They Put Up “CHILDREN AT PLAY” Signs?

An often heard neighborhood request concerns the posting of generalized warning signs with the “SLOW-CHILDREN AT PLAY” or other similar messages. Parental concern for the safety of children in the street near home, and a misplaced but wide-spread public faith in traffic signs to provide protection often prompt these requests.

Although some other states have posted such signs widely in residential areas, no factual evidence has been presented to document their success in reducing pedestrian accidents, operating speeds or legal liability. Studies have shown that many types of signs attempting to warn of normal conditions in residential areas have failed to achieve the desired safety benefits. If signs encourage parents and children to believe they have an added degree of protection, which the signs do not and cannot provide, a great disservice results.

Because of these serious considerations, Minnesota law does not recognize, and Federal Standards discourage, use of “Children at Play” signs. Specific warnings for schools, playgrounds, parks and other recreational facilities are available for use where clearly justified.

Children should not be encouraged to play within the street travelways. The sign has long been rejected since it is a direct and open suggestion that this behavior is acceptable.



Blind Fire Department Driveway Request

County Engineer,

The Town of Greenwood Fire Hall has a blind driveway along your County road that makes it difficult for fire trucks to exit during an emergency. We've seen a flashing beacon with a fire truck sign in other locations throughout the state similar to ours. Could you put one of these signs and beacons up at our location so that when we exit, vehicles traveling on your County road use caution when approaching the Fire Department driveway?

Thank you,
Fire Chief



Sample Agreement – Blind Fire Department Driveway

THIS AGREEMENT is made and entered into by and between the County of St.

Louis, a duly organized county within the State of Minnesota, hereinafter referred to as the "County", and the Town of Greenwood, hereinafter referred to as the "Town", an organized township within St. Louis County, Minnesota.

WHEREAS County State Aid Highway No. 77 is hereinafter referred to as "Highway 77"; and

WHEREAS, the County has authorized the installation of remote activated solar flashing beacons mounted on fire hall warning signs on Highway 77, hereinafter referred to as "Warning Beacons"; and

WHEREAS, the County has approved a plan to install Warning Beacons; and

WHEREAS, the County and the Town shall participate in the cost, maintenance and operation of the Warning Beacons, as hereinafter set forth.

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS MUTUALLY AGREED AND UNDERSTOOD AS FOLLOWS:

1. The Town, at its cost and expense, shall prepare the Plan to furnish the Warning Beacons.
2. The County shall approve the Plan and the Warning Beacons, and all required hardware shall conform to the specifications and requirements of the County.
3. The Town shall pay one-hundred percent (100%) of the cost of materials and associated costs incurred by the Warning Beacon vendor or manufacturer required to furnish fully functional Warning Beacons in accordance with the approved Plan, but not limited to, the cost of the Warning Beacons and all required hardware for a complete installation.

4. The County shall install the Warning Beacons, fire hall warning sign panels (MUTCD Code W11-8) and mounting devices in accordance with the 2005 Edition of the Minnesota Department of Transportation "Standard Specifications for Construction", the Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Roadside Design Guide at its cost and expense.
5. The County shall perform a final inspection of the completed installation of Warning Beacons and shall notify the Town of the County's acceptance or rejection of the installation of the Warning Beacons in writing to the Town. If the County rejects the installation including, but not limited to, the workmanship thereof, the Town shall perform whatever modification(s) required to satisfy the County's requirements.
6. If required, the Town shall provide an adequate electrical power supply to the Warning Beacons, and shall provide the necessary electrical power for the operation of the Warning Beacons at its cost and expense.
7. Should the County or the Town determine that any of the Warning Beacons are in need of repair or replacement, it is understood and agreed that the Town shall pay one-hundred (100%) of the cost of materials and any associated costs incurred by the Warning Beacon vendor or manufacturer required to repair or replace said damaged or deteriorated Warning Beacons including, but not limited to, the cost of the Warning Beacons and all required hardware for a complete installation.
8. The County shall maintain the sign panel and mounting devices, and install Warning Beacon replacement components furnished by the Town, at its cost and

expense.

9. Each Party designates an Authorized Representative for the purpose of administering this Agreement. A Party's authorized representative has the authority to give and receive notices, and to make any other decision required or permitted by this Agreement.

a. For the County:

Victor Lund
Acting Traffic Engineer
4787 Midway Road
Duluth, MN 55811
(218) 625-3873
e-mail: lundv@co.st-louis.mn.us

b. For the Town:

Ellen Trancheff
Town of Greenwood
3000 County Road 77
Tower, MN 55790
(218) 753-2231

10. This Agreement represents the full and complete understanding of the both Parties represent that neither Party is relying on any prior agreements or understandings, whether oral or written. This Agreement shall be modified only with the signed, written consent of both Parties.

11. This Agreement may be terminated by any party upon thirty (30) days written notice to the other Party's authorized representative. Upon termination of this Agreement, the Warning Beacons shall be immediately removed by the

forces and returned to the Town.

12. Each of the Parties hereto hereby agrees that it shall defend, indemnify and save harmless the other Party and all of their employees and agents from any and all claims, demands, actions or causes of action of whatever nature or character arising out of or by reason of their negligent or intentional acts or omissions in the execution or performance of the work provided herein, including, but not limited to, the installation, maintenance or repair of any of the Warning Beacons on Highway 77.

13. Any and all employees of the County, while engaged in the performance of any work or service which the County is specifically required to perform under this Agreement, shall be considered employees of the County, and not the Town, and that any and all claims that may or might arise under the Workers Compensation Act of the State of Minnesota on behalf of said employees while so engaged and any claims made by any third parties as a consequence of any act of said employees, shall be the sole obligation of the County.

14. Any and all employees of the Town, while engaged in the performance of any work or service which the Town is specifically required to perform under this Agreement, shall be considered employees of the Town, and not the County, and that any and all claims that may or might arise under the Workers Compensation Act of the State of Minnesota on behalf of said employees while so engaged and any claims made by any third parties as a consequence of any act of said employees, shall be the sole obligation of the Town.

Why Don't They Put In More STOP SIGNS?

A stop sign is one of our most valuable and effective control devices when used at the right place and under the right conditions. It is intended to help drivers and pedestrians at an intersection decide who has the right-of-way.

One common misuse of stop signs is to arbitrarily interrupt through traffic, either by causing it to stop, or by causing such an inconvenience as to force the traffic to use other routes. Where stop signs are installed as “nuisances” or “speed breakers,” there is a high incidence of intentional violation. In those locations where vehicles do not stop, the speed reduction is effective only in the immediate vicinity of the stop sign, and frequently speeds are actually higher between intersections. For these reasons, it should not be used as a speed control device.

A school crossing may look dangerous for children to use, causing parents to demand a stop sign to halt traffic. Now a vehicle which had been a problem for 3 seconds while approaching and passing the intersection becomes a problem for a much longer period. A situation of indecision is created as to when to cross as a pedestrian or when to start as a motorist. Normal gaps in traffic through which crossings could be made safely no longer exist. An intersection which previously was not busy now looks like a major intersection. It really isn't – it just looks like it. It doesn't even look safer and it usually isn't.

Most drivers are reasonable and prudent with no intention of maliciously violating traffic regulations; however, when an unreasonable restriction is imposed, it may result in flagrant violations. In such cases, the stop sign can create a false sense of security in a pedestrian and an attitude of contempt in a motorist. These two attitudes can and often do conflict with tragic results.

Well-developed, nationally recognized guidelines help to indicate when such controls become necessary. These guidelines take into consideration, among other things, the probability of vehicles arriving at an intersection at the same time, the length of time traffic must wait to enter, and the availability of safe crossing opportunities.



MnDOT LRRB video on STOP signs: <http://youtu.be/1SmbL5Oo15c>

When Will a Lower Speed Limit be Posted on My Street?

A common belief is that posting a speed limit will influence drivers to drive at that speed. The facts indicate otherwise.

Research conducted in many parts of this country over a span of several decades has shown that drivers are influenced more by the appearance of the highway itself and the prevailing traffic conditions than by the posted speed limit.

Minnesota's Basic Speed Law requires that:

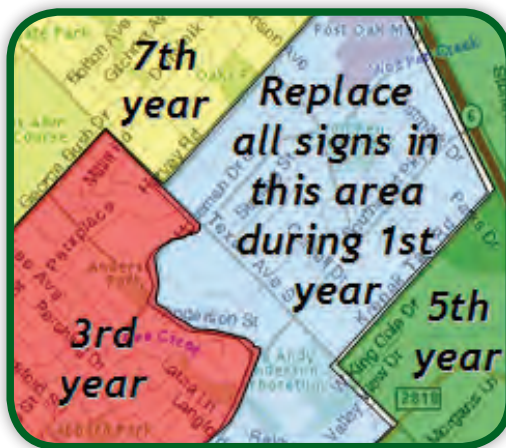
“No person shall drive a vehicle on a highway at a speed greater than is reasonable and prudent under the conditions and having regard to the actual and potential hazards then existing. In every event speed shall be so restricted as may be necessary to avoid colliding with any person, vehicle or other conveyance on or entering the highway in compliance with legal requirements and the duty of all persons to use due care.”

In Minnesota, the maximum speed limit in an urban district is 30 miles per hour unless otherwise posted. An urban district is defined as the territory contiguous to and including any street which is built up with structures devoted to business, industry, or dwelling houses situated at intervals of less than 100 feet for a distance of a quarter of a mile or more. Outside urban districts, the maximum speed limit for any passenger vehicle is currently 55 miles per hour. These speeds are not always posted but all Minnesota motorists are required to know these basic 30 and 55 mile per hour speed laws.

Under Minnesota law, intermediate speed limits (except school speed limits) between 30 and 55 miles per hour may be established on any road, including county highways and city streets, only by the State Commissioner of Transportation. The commissioner must establish the speed limit upon the basis of an engineering and traffic investigation. This investigation includes an analysis of roadway conditions, accident reports, and the prevailing speed of prudent drivers. If speed limit signs are posted for a lower limit than is needed to safely meet these conditions, many drivers will simply ignore the signs. At the same time, other drivers will stay within the posted limits. This generally increases the conflicts between faster and slower drivers, reduces the gaps in traffic through which crossings could be made safely and increases the difficulty for pedestrians to judge the speed of approaching vehicles. Studies have shown that where uniformity of speed is not maintained, accidents generally increase.



MnDOT LRRB video on speed limits: <http://youtu.be/8edH-toBesM>



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