

MAT SAMPLE ROAD SIGN POLICY (October 2011)

The following is intended to serve as a general guide for towns in Minnesota to use in developing and adopting a plan to comply with the new guidelines regarding road signs imposed by the Federal Highway Administration. This sample policy is not intended to serve as formal legal or engineering advice. Towns are encouraged to adopt a policy comparable to the one below, or one developed for the town by a qualified consultant, prior to January 22, 2012. This date is the current deadline for having a plan in place, although a pending amendment to the federal transportation rules proposes to delay the deadline until two years following adoption of the final rules, which is expected to occur in early 2012 but not before the January 22 deadline passes. MAT will inform towns about any need to modify policies after the final adoption of any of the pending amendments.

_____ Township Road Sign Inventory, Retro-Reflectivity Compliance Evaluation, and Replacement Policy

It is the stated objective of _____ Township, _____ County, MN to maintain its town roads in a safe but cost effective manner. As part of its maintenance efforts, _____ Township recognizes that regulatory , warning, and directional road signs (commonly referred to collectively as safety signs), including but not limited to stop signs, yield signs and other similar traffic control devices, need to be properly inventoried, assessed for compliance with applicable retro-reflectivity standards, maintained, and replaced from time to time.

_____ Township further recognizes that when signs are installed within town road rights-of-way they must comply with state and federal regulations as primarily outlined in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. As part of its efforts to comply with applicable regulations, the Town Board of _____ Township shall be guided by the following plan adopted in accordance with Section 2A.08 of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices:

1. Inventory. In recognition of the importance of knowing the number, type, and location of road signs situated in township road rights-of-way, it is the intent of the Town Board to have any inventory of all town road signs completed by _____ (insert reasonable date for town conducting inventory – the pending rules amendment would

require the inventory to be completed within two years following final adoption, which is expected to occur in early 2012 so a town should plan to have its inventory completed no later than early 2014). The completed inventory shall be maintained using _____(choose either paper records or a computer program) and shall be updated each time a sign is installed, replaced, or removed but not less than on an annual basis. The inventory shall indicate the type of sign, the number of each type of sign, the location of each sign including the direction the sign faces, the date of installation (when known for pre-existing signs), type of material used on sign face (when known), a general statement on the condition of the sign, a record of any maintenance performed on the sign, and the date of sign removal if applicable.

2. Removal of Excess Signs. In recognition of the fact that excess road signs have been shown to reduce the effectiveness of signage, as well as impose an unnecessary financial burden on the road authority, it shall be the policy of _____ Township to remove signs determined to be unnecessary for safety purposes and which are not otherwise required to comply with an applicable state or federal statute or regulation. The removal of signs shall be based on an engineering study and the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Particular attention shall be paid to recommendations on signage for roads considered to be “low-volume” under the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices as adopted by the State.
3. Retro-reflectivity Evaluation. In recognition of the new retro-reflectivity standards adopted into the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices by the Federal Highway Administration, the town board shall arrange to have all town road signs not removed under section 2 above evaluated for compliance with the applicable retro-reflectivity standards. It shall be the intent of the township to conduct this evaluation using the following method as authorized by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices rules: (Choose one)
 - a. Visual Nighttime Inspection Method
 - i. Utilizing Calibration Sign Procedure
 - or
 - ii. Utilizing Comparison Panel Procedure
 - b. Measured Sign Retro-Reflectivity Method

It shall be the intent of the town board to have this evaluation completed by (insert reasonable completion date, recommended no later than early 2014.) The board reserves the right to change which evaluation method will be utilized as expressly found necessary by the board due to budgetary constraints or other practical difficulties in completing this process.

4. Sign Replacement. After completion of the inventory, removal of unnecessary signs, and proper retro-reflectivity evaluation, the town board hereby establishes the following priority order in which road signs will be replaced:
- a. First priority shall be given to replacing all signs determined not to meet applicable retro-reflectivity standards. Top priority shall also be given to replacing missing or damaged signs determined to be of a priority for safety purposes.
 - b. Second priority shall be given to signs determined to be marginal in their retro-reflectivity evaluation.
 - c. Third priority shall be given to all remaining signs as they come to the end of their anticipated service life, become damaged, etc.

In addition, within each category above, further priority shall be given to warning and regulatory signs on roads with higher vehicle usage.

5. On-going Maintenance. The town shall include a general inspection of road signs in township rights-of-way as part of its annual road inspections. The town shall update it's sign inventory as provided in section 1. After the initial replacement of signs as provided for in Section 4, the town shall, for the purpose of complying with the requirements of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices to maintain minimum retro-reflectivity standards, shall, as budgetary factors allow, replace signs as they reach the end of the latter of their (a) warranty period; (b) expected life expectancy for the facing material used on the sign; or (c) expected life as determined by an authorized engineering study. Damaged, stolen, or missing signs may be replaced as needed.

Adopted by _____ Township, _____ 20__

Chairperson

Clerk