

CROW WING COUNTY
TRAFFIC SIGN RETROREFLECTIVITY MAINTENANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Adopted by Crow Wing County Board of Commissioners - August 9, 2011

PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Traffic Sign Retroreflectivity Maintenance Policies and Procedures is to establish the process by which required levels of retroreflectivity will be maintained on roads under Crow Wing County jurisdiction. This will include roads on the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) system and the local County Road network. In addition, town roads in Unorganized Territories, that the county has formally accepted jurisdiction for, shall be included. Unorganized Territory town roads, which may be platted to the public or utilized by the public that have not been formally accepted by the County, shall not be included. The maintenance of roadway signage is essential for routine travel and the safety of the traveling public. The County Highway Department will provide such services, either with its own personnel or by contract, in a safe and cost effective manner. Due to variables in weather, traffic issues, personnel, budget limitations, environmental concerns and other factors, this policy and the associated procedures must remain flexible.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Crow Wing County is currently developing a field sign inventory database. Once all data is updated and the system is in place, the county will utilize the management method of expected sign life to stay in compliance with federal retroreflectivity standards. High Intensity Prismatic (H.I.P.) sheeting shall be utilized on signs. The expected sign life for the H.I.P. sheeting being used shall be twelve (12) years. This is based upon information contained in Minnesota's Best Practices for Traffic Sign Maintenance/Management Handbook published in October, 2010. Within six months from the date that signs included under the retroreflectivity requirements have been in place for twelve (12) years, they will be replaced. Although not required, random visual nighttime inspections may be performed to verify the twelve (12) year life of the sheeting and to identify signs degraded by vandalism or other reasons. Signs included under the retroreflectivity requirements, which typically are only in use two to three months per year (traffic control, weight restriction, etc.) shall be replaced on a twenty (20) year schedule.

Prior to completion of the updated database, the county will utilize the visual nighttime assessment method by means of a calibration signs procedure. Calibration signs with known retroreflectivity levels at or above the specified minimums will be erected at one or more of the county maintenance shop locations. The nighttime inspector(s) will use the visual appearance of the calibration signs to establish the evaluation threshold for the night's inspection activities. The night of the inspection, staff will view each sign type (regulatory black/white, stop sign, warning sign and guidance sign) mounted at the standard height from a standard pick-up truck with low beams, from a distance between 100 and 600 feet in advance of the signs, to mimic field conditions as much as practical. When not in use, the calibration signs shall be stored inside so the retroreflectivity does not deteriorate over time. 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. Sign replacement will occur as soon as practical.