

**CITY OF CLEARWATER
SIGN RETROFLECTIVITY EVALUATION
AND MAINTENANCE
POLICY**

1. INTRODUCTION

The Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) published by the US Department of Transportation (FHWA), set standards for basic principals of traffic signs to promote safety on public roads and establishes uniform standards.

Recently adopted language requires all agencies that maintain roadways open to public travel to adopt a sign maintenance program to maintain traffic sign retroreflectivity at or above specific levels. “Retroreflectivity” describes how light is reflected from a surface and returned to its original source.

Improvements to nighttime visibility of traffic signs will help drivers better navigate roads at night and thus promote safety and mobility. Improvements in sign visibility will also help older drivers whose visual capabilities may be declining.

The MN MUTCD requires a city to establish an assessment or management method that is designed to meet federal standards. The assessment or management method must be established by January 22, 2014.

Retroreflective properties of all sign sheeting materials degrade over time making signs progressively less visible at night. Environmental conditions can cause a loss of retroreflective performance as well as damage due to vandalism, thus, losing their effectiveness in communicating regulatory, warning and guidance messages, especially at night. To maintain nighttime effectiveness, signs must be replaced before they reach the end of their useful life.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish how the city will implement a management and assessment method to meet the MN MUTCH sign retroreflectivity requirements. The goal is to improve safety on the city’s streets and road.

3. APPLICABLE SIGNS

This policy applies to all traffic signs in the city with the exception of:

- a. Stop signs at MnDOT controlled intersections.
- b. Specific signs installed by others (MnDOT, transit agencies and private signs as agreed upon by the City of Clearwater.)
- c. Signs along county highways & MNDOT highways.
- d. Bike path and other pedestrian-control signs not pertaining to vehicle traffic

installed by government agencies other than the city.

- e. Signs on approaches to city streets installed by private business and/or property owners.

4. APPROVED MANAGEMENT METHOD

After reviewing management methods proposed for sign maintenance, the City of Clearwater has approved the following method:

- a. **REPLACEMENT DUE TO NEED.** After taking a complete inventory of all signs in the city, signs will be replaced when they are worn out. All signs replaced due to this method will be replaced with signs that meet the minimum retro reflective levels as established by the MN MUTCD.
- b. **EXPECTED SIGN LIFE.** When the above signs have been replaced according to the replacement due to need method, an expected sign life process/practice will be established utilizing a combination of expected sheeting warranty life estimations of manufacturers/suppliers and “on the ground” experience in the field. The inventory of signs will contain information regarding placement, expected years of life and inspection records indicating degradation to monitor changes to ensure nighttime visibility. The eventual goal will be that the majority of retroreflectivity related sign replacement will be handled through the expected life cycle/sign life process.

5. INSPECTION AND REPLACEMENT

The City of Clearwater shall establish procedures for regular inspection of signs. Those procedures will include an inspection survey, regular inspections and criteria for determining whether a particular sign condition is in need of replacement.

6. MISCELLANEOUS SIGN PRACTICES:

- a. Contact city hall office for repairs needed or in case of emergency replacement.
- b. Training will be provided to ensure staff can perform maintenance duties in an efficient and responsive manner. Training shall consist of, at a minimum, appropriate signing and traffic control seminars (when available and funding available through budget), training videos or website trainings as appropriate and available.
- c. Unauthorized signs will be removed by City from city right of way:

7. REVIEW AND MODIFICATION OF POLICY:

The Council may modify or clarify this policy at any time.

8. REVIEW OF POLICY:

The City Administrator will keep on file comments and complaints received regarding this policy. The policy will be reviewed periodically. Any review will consider comments and complaints since the last review and any other factors affecting the policy or its implementation.

9. EFFECTIVE DATE OF POLICY:

This policy shall be effective upon approval by city council on November 21st, 2011. Modifications of the policy shall be effective on the date said modifications are approved by city council.

Lee E. Monk, Mayor

Attest

Jennifer Wothe, City Administrator