Sign Retroreflectivity Requirements
New National Standards
What it means to you!

One of the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA’s) primary missions is to improve safety on the nation’s roadways. More than 42,000 people have been killed on American roads during each of the past eight years. While only one-quarter of all travel occurs at night, about half of the traffic fatalities occur during nighttime hours. To address this disparity, the FHWA has adopted new traffic sign retroreflectivity requirements that are included as Revision 2 of the 2003 MUTCD.

To comply with the new requirements, public agencies will have until January 2012 to implement and then continue to use an assessment or management method that is designed to maintain traffic sign retroreflectivity at or above the minimum levels specified.

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ROUTINE SEASONAL CULVERT MAINTENANCE

Spring:
• Inspect the inside as well as both ends of the pipe.
• Remove blockages (trash, brush, cornstalks, etc.)

Summer:
• Remove blockages.
• Clean and flush the length of the pipe.
• Repair, improve, or install headwalls, pipe ends, and splash pads.
• Trim and remove brush at pipe ends, and mow grass and weeds.
• Cut and remove trees and limbs that threaten to fall and block upstream ditches.
• Establish vegetation on bare slopes at pipe ends.
• Add fill to cover pipe more thoroughly.

Fall:
• Remove blockages.
• Mark headwalls or pipe ends for snowplow operators.

Source: 2007 Drainage Workshop Notebook, Maine Local Roads

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National Public Works Week is a celebration of the tens of thousands of men and women in North America who provide and maintain infrastructure and services collectively known as public works. For more information on resources available to help promote the public works profession, please visit: http://www.apwa.net/About/npww/
A greater risk of injury or death for highway workers has resulted from the increase of maintenance and reconstruction of the nation’s highways. To help make work zones safer and provide additional safety to everyone on the roadway, FHWA recently finalized its proposed Worker Visibility Rule.

The rule requires that “all workers within the right-of-way of a Federal-aid highway who are exposed to either traffic or to construction equipment within the work areas shall wear high-visibility safety apparel.” The rule is effective on November 24, 2008. Workers are defined as those people on foot whose duties place them within the right-of-way of a Federal-aid highway, such as highway construction and maintenance personnel, surveyors, utility crews, responders to incidents, and law enforcement personnel when directing traffic, investigating crashes, and handling road situations.

In addition, mowing crews, gardeners, Adopt-A-Highway volunteers, etc. will also have to wear the high-visibility clothing to be in compliance with the new rule. The only exception will be law enforcement personnel during manhunts, traffic stops, and searches.

High visibility apparel means personal protective safety clothing that is intended to provide conspicuity during both daytime and night-time usage, and that meets the Performance Class 2 or 3 requirements of the ANSI/ISEA 107-2004 publication entitled “American National Standard for High Visibility Safety Apparel and Headwear.” Rule 23 CFR Part 634 in the Code of Federal Regulations was published in response to SAFETEA-U-LU and can be accessed at:

http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20061800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2006/E6-19910.htm

The selection of CLASS 1, 2 or 3 apparel is based on proximity to traffic, the speed of traffic expected in a work area and whether attention can be paid to traffic while working.

Class 1 Apparel
This apparel is for workers exposed to traffic traveling less than 25 MPH and, therefore, not acceptable for workers on or near Federal Aid Highways. The main difference between CLASS 1 and 2 is the amount of fluorescent background material and retroreflective material used on the clothing. Typical workers required to wear CLASS 1 include parking lot attendants, warehouse workers, shopping cart retrievers, and sidewalk maintenance personnel.

Class 2 Apparel
The most common garments are shirts, jackets, or sleeveless vests. This apparel provides 360 degrees of torso visibility with horizontal and vertical retroreflective stripes. Typical occupations for workers who must wear CLASS 2 are: forestry operations, roadway construction, trash collection, high-volume parking, emergency response, and law enforcement. Some “safety” vests look similar to CLASS 2 so you must inspect the tag to be sure it complies to avoid violations.

Class 3 Apparel
CLASS 3 covers more of your body than CLASS 2. It is for workers who are constantly exposed to high-speed traffic and who cannot pay attention to approaching traffic. If you are not sure which class to wear, choose CLASS 3 to be safe. Workers who must wear this type include roadway construction personnel, utility workers, survey crews, and emergency responders.
Public agencies will have until January 2015 to replace any regulatory, warning, or post-mounted guide (except street name) signs and until January 2018 to replace any street name signs and overhead guide signs that are identified by the assessment or management method as failing to meet the minimum retroreflectivity levels.

Provided that an assessment or management method is being used, an agency would be in compliance with the requirements of the new provisions even if there are some individual signs that do not meet the minimum retroreflectivity levels at a particular point in time. Instead of using one or more of the five assessment or management methods described above, agencies are also permitted to develop and use other methods based on engineering studies.

Because of the seven to 10-year compliance period that has been adopted for replacing signs that have insufficient retroreflectivity, highway departments will be able to implement improved sign inspection and management procedures and subsequently replace the signs in a time frame that is consistent with the typical sign replacement cycle. Cost increases from upgrading materials and/or processes might be offset by the long-term savings that result from the longer life of the higher performance sheeting products.

For additional information on this rulemaking and sign retroreflectivity, please visit the FHWA retroreflectivity web site www.fhwa.dot.gov/retro.
Spring 2008 APWA Chapter Update

This spring will be one of the busiest ever for the New England Chapter with no less than 7 meetings on the calendar in April and May. These meetings include:

Spring Supervisors Workshop – April 1st and 3rd – Merrimack, NH

New England Chapter Spring meeting - April 9th – Manchester Country Club, Manchester, CT

Spring Mechanics’ workshop – April 17th - Taunton, MA

Environmental Management Systems (EMS) workshop – April 16th - Holliston, MA

Administrative Assistants event and luncheon – April 22nd – Worcester, MA

Western MA regional meeting – May 7th - Bernardston, MA

National Public Works Week luncheon – May 21st - Boston, MA

Details on each meeting and registration forms can be found on the Chapter’s website: http://newengland.apwa.net

Spring Maintenance Checklist: Where to Begin

As we recover from the winter of 2007-2008 and prepare for spring, maintenance is in the air. Here are a few things that may need attention.

Sign Damage
Check for signs damaged during the winter by vehicle accidents and snow plowing operations. Repair or replace signs and signposts missing, broken or bent.

Blocked culverts, ditches and catch basins
Clear the debris blocking culverts and storm sewers to help avoid flooding and deterioration of the road structure.

Faded Pavement Markings
Check for markings that need repainting and schedule the job when the weather permits.

Potholes
Make temporary patching repairs as soon as possible and plan for permanent repairs.

Guardrail Damage
Repair or replace guardrails that fell victim to winter driving and plowing operations.

Road Maintenance activities
Review and revise plans for ongoing road maintenance based on your spring inspection and available resources.
Technology Transfer Center
2008 Spring/Summer Training Calendar

May
7-8  Designing Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities, Farmington
7-8  OSHA 10-Hour Roadway Construction Training, Colchester
15  APWA Click, Listen & Learn: Delta Force Readiness – Developing Tomorrow’s Public Works Leaders, Wallingford
21-22 Designing Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities, Storrs

June
10  Construction Inspection, Colchester
11  Construction Inspection, Canton
12  Bridge Maintenance for Local Agencies, East Lyme
13  Bridge Maintenance for Local Agencies, Torrington
24  Basics of a Good Road, Hartford
25  Basics of a Good Road, Bethel
26  Basics of a Good Road, Storrs

July
8   Roadway Safety Fundamentals, Rocky Hill
9   Roadway Safety Fundamentals, Cheshire
24  Pavement Preservation Roundtable Discussion, Hartford
30  Powers & Responsibilities of a CMLTA, New Britain
31  Powers & Responsibilities of a CMLTA, TBD

For updates on our training programs, visit us at: www.t2center.uconn.edu