



TOIRMA Update

By Jim Donelan

TOIRMA Executive Director

Signing Township/Road District Roads

THE CLASSIC ROCK SONG by The Five Man Electrical Band says “sign, sign everywhere a sign, blockin’ out the scenery, breakin’ my mind, do this don’t do that, can’t you read the sign?” Unlike the “signs” referred to in the song, there is a requirement that there be uniform signs, “traffic control signs,” on public highways throughout the United States and the State of Illinois. This includes local roads under the jurisdiction of townships/road districts. From a risk management perspective, proper installation and maintenance of traffic control devices and signs is vital. It is important for highway commissioners to document that he/she is inspecting or repairing signs on an ongoing basis. This can be easily accomplished utilizing TOIRMA’s *Highway Commissioner’s Diary*. If you need a new *Diary*, please call our office and we are happy to send one to you.

It should come as no surprise that the correct placement of traffic control signs on road district roads helps ensure traffic safety by providing for orderly and predictable movement of traffic. When considering the installation of traffic control devices and signs, it is critical that traffic conditions and other technical considerations be evaluated/studied first. This evaluation/report should be conducted by a qualified engineer.

When placing signs, townships/road districts in Illinois are required to conform to the:

- *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)*
- Illinois Department of Transportation’s (IDOT) *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* and any supplement
- and receive written approval of the county engineer or superintendent of highways prior to placement.

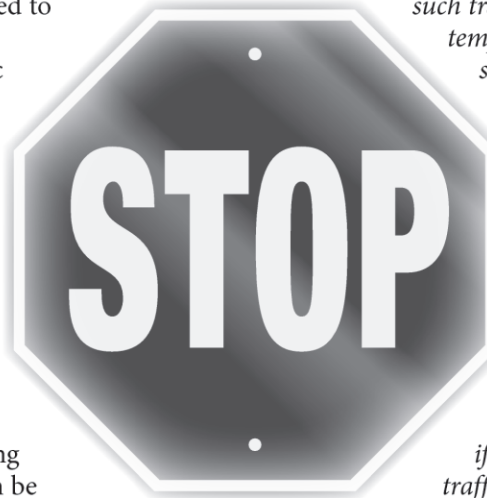
[625 ILCS 5/11-304] states:

*“Local authorities in their respective maintenance jurisdiction shall place and maintain such traffic-control devices, including temporary stop signs placed as a substitute for missing or damaged permanent stop signs required by the State Manual, upon highways under their maintenance jurisdiction as are required to indicate and carry out the provisions of this Chapter, and local traffic ordinances or to regulate, warn, or guide traffic. All such traffic control devices shall conform to the State Manual and Specifications and shall be justified by traffic warrants stated in the Manual. Temporary stop signs shall be placed in a manner to provide adequate visibility and legibility, and shall be placed within duration recommendations in the State Manual, unless circumstances require longer placement. **Placement of traffic-control devices on township or road district roads also shall be subject to the written approval of the county engineer or superintendent of highways.**”*

[605 ILCS 5/6-201 & 201.16 state]:

*“The highway commissioner of each road district shall ... **subject to the written approval** of the County Superintendent of Highways to place, erect, and maintain on township or road district roads, traffic-control devices and signs authorized by this Code or by “The Illinois Vehicle Code”*

The *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)* is available on-line at U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) website: www.mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov



As a highway commissioner, remember to do the following prior to installing a traffic control device and sign:

- Contact your County Engineer (highway commissioners must have written approval before placing).
- Contact J.U.L.I.E, Illinois One-Call System at: 811 or (800) 892-0123.
- Maintain the sign (this is an ongoing responsibility).

The *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, Illinois Supplement to the National Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* is available on-line at the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) website: www.idot.illinois.gov/home/resources/manuals/manuals-and-guides.

IDOT also has a useful publication for highway commissioners pertaining to signs on district roads titled, *Signing Road District and Township Highways*. This publication is available on-line on IDOT's website: http://www.idot.illinois.gov/Assets/uploads/files/Transportation-System/Manuals-Guides-&-Handbooks/T2/P030_RoadDistrictSignGuide.pdf, or by going to the IDOT website, www.idot.illinois.gov and searching for "*Signing Road District and Township Highways*" in the search box.

It is clear the placement of any traffic control devices

and signage on township/road district roads should be carefully evaluated by a professional (usually the county engineer). Don't forget that a highway commissioner cannot place a traffic control device or sign without first receiving "written permission" from the county engineer. From a risk management perspective, just as important is maintaining signs properly, for not doing so may result in unnecessary headaches and lawsuits.

Again, TOIRMA urges highway commissioners to work with their respective county engineer to conduct the appropriate studies **prior** to placement of any signage. This will ensure that applicable laws and regulations are followed.

I hope this information is helpful. Please feel free to contact me toll-free at (888) 562-7861 or by email at jdanelan@toirma.org with any questions you have.

Thank you and have a safe summer.



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