

# MAINE LOCAL ROADS NEWS

A Newsletter to Assist Maine Towns in Dealing with Local Transportation Concerns

From The Maine Local Roads Center

## MAINE LOCAL ROADS CENTER

Community Services Division • MaineDOT

16 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333  
www.maine.gov/mdot/csd/mlrc/

Feel free to contact us with your road questions.

Toll Free Number  
1-800-498-9133  
email: local.web@maine.gov

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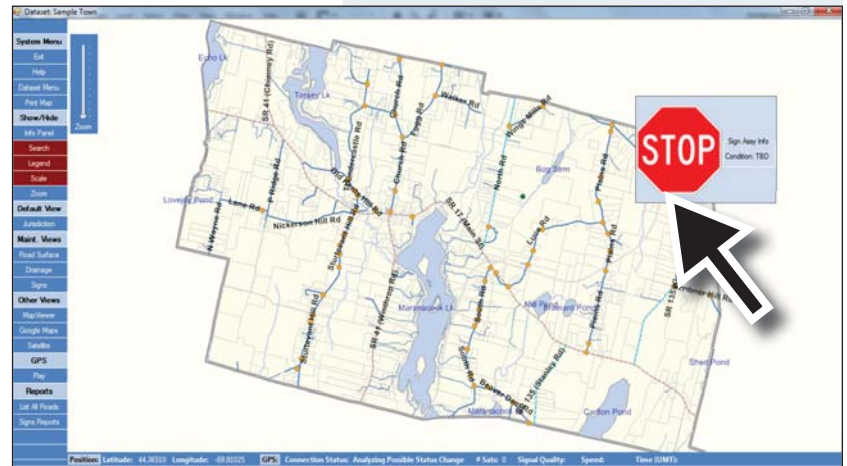
## Managing Town Roads (and road signs)

How does your town determine which roads will be paved every year? If you're looking for a better way, consider our new RSMS 16 software.

It was designed to be simple and easy to use. We now have a major upgrade to our former RSMS11 software. It can be found at [www.rsms.info](http://www.rsms.info). This new version will now use a town map to illustrate your town road conditions PLUS it also allows towns to collect town wide sign inventory and condition details. Data can be collected in the field for subsequent entry into the program or you can use an inexpensive GPS antenna.

Once you collect the road or sign information. RSMS 16 will visually display the road maintenance categories on a town map. Each road section is color-coded based on its current maintenance category (no maintenance, routine, preventive, rehabilitation and reconstruction). It also displays aerial imagery, Google maps and MaineDOT's Mapviewer.

The cost is \$195 to new Maine municipality users, \$100 to current RSMS 11 users and \$500 to private agencies. The cost includes the software, user guide and distress field manual, and free technical assistance. Over 125 Maine towns, cities, and other agencies have bought this software already. This is a powerful, very low cost approach to local road management compared to similar options costing much more.



Below: Screen view of sign data.

For further information on RSMS 16 please contact Jerry Douglass at 207-624-3290 or via email [jerry.douglass@maine.gov](mailto:jerry.douglass@maine.gov)

## New 2015 & 2016 Laws Relating to Transportation

### 2015 LAWS

DIG SAFE (NON-MEMBER) CONTACT TO THE PUC LD 200 –Emergency Passed; Resolves 2015, c. 9 (4/14/15). As finally authorized, among the several amendments to the PUC rule, there is a provision that requires any operator of underground facilities who is not a member of Dig Safe (a nonmember operator), such as a municipal water or wastewater system operator, to notify the PUC within 10 days of any change with respect to the contact person's contact information for the purpose of updating the Commission's OKTODIG database.

....LAWS continued on page 6



# “Deadly fixed objects” on Maine Roads

*Do your town roads have hazardous mailboxes, trees, walls, and fences just off the road?*



Based on 3-year crash data (2013-2015) available from the MaineDOT, on average, 68 people in Maine are killed annually and another 2,800+ are injured in crashes where vehicles leave the road and hit a roadside fixed-object. These “lane departures” account for approximately 50% of all Maine fatalities.

When it comes to improving safety for crashes, the primary objective is to keep the vehicles from leaving the road in the first place through measures such as signs, pavement markings, delineator posts, etc. In reality, however, some road departures will still occur due to other reasons like driver distraction, weariness, etc. To help make the road safer for these motorists, roadsides should be designed and/or retrofitted when possible, to have a sufficient “clear zone” free of any hazardous fixed-objects.

### What is a clear zone?

A “clear zone” is defined as *“the unobstructed, traversable area provided beyond the edge of the though traveled way for the recovery of errant vehicles. The clear zone includes shoulders, bike lanes, and auxiliary lanes, except those auxiliary lanes that function like through lanes.”* It further states that the clear zone distance varies depending on the traffic volumes, speed, and roadside geometry.

For instance, on a low-speed, low volume rural roadway, the clear zone distance can be as little as 7 feet, whereas on a high-speed, high-volume freeway the distance can be greater than 50 feet. In urban areas, however, where the speeds are much lower and there are sidewalks,

on-street parking, street furniture, the minimum lateral distance from the face of the curb to the obstruction is 1-1/2 feet, although 4 to 6 feet is preferred.

### Potential roadside hazards include:

- Ditches
- Curbs
- Utility poles
- Median barriers
- Sign posts
- Guardrails
- Trees
- Fences / Gates
- Bridge rails
- Culverts ends / headwalls
- Embankments / Bridge Piers
- Mailboxes
- Edge drop-offs

### What fixed objects are hit the most frequently in Maine?

According to 2013-2015 crash data published by MaineDOT, the highest number of fixed-object crashes per year involved **trees** with an annual average of 1,560 crashes, **ditches** with an annual average of 1,284 crashes, followed by **utility poles** at 1,219 crashes, **embankments** at 789 crashes, and **guardrails** at 769 crashes.

### Some Examples of Dangerous Fixed Objects:

- Ditches that are unusually steep or deep.
- Sign posts that are not crash worthy (wood posts larger than 4X4 inch with no weakening holes) or not breakaway (metal posts).
- Trees with trunks 4 inches or more in diameter.
- Mailboxes with wood posts that are larger than 4” by 4”.
- Mailboxes with metal post that are embedded more than 2 feet in the ground and are stronger than 2 inch diameter standard strength steel.
- Mailboxes which are “creative” welded steel or brick-encased, or granite posts.
- Pavement edge drop-off greater than 2-1/2 inches.

### What to do about roadside hazards

Before you take any action on how to treat an existing fixed-object along a roadside, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the fixed object located in the town right-of-way?
- Is the fixed object located in the clear zone?
- Is it considered hazardous?
- Is the owner easy to work with or not?
- If you cannot remove, relocate, or modify the hazard, is adding guardrail feasible? If not... Would delineation

help. Guide drivers around the hazard, particularly at night and in low visibility conditions?

Examples of delineation include retroreflective tapes on utility poles; and object markers at the end of culvert headwalls.



Since the municipality may be liable for injuries caused by obstructions in town ways, the primary concern is to remove the obstruction. This can often be accomplished by notifying the person responsible for creating the obstruction, and demanding immediate removal. If this fails, and if the obstruction is located in the traveled portion of the town way, the road commissioner or municipal officers should have the obstruction removed and should seek to recover expenses of removal from the responsible party.

A number of Maine laws provide for municipal authority to deal with obstructions. If, however, the obstruction (such as a post or column) is located within the right-of-way, but outside of the traveled portion of the town way (in the road shoulder, for example), and the abutter refuses to remove the obstruction when requested to do so by the municipality, the municipality should not attempt to exercise “self-help” and remove the obstruction. Instead, the municipality should file suit seeking to have the abutter who constructed or placed the obstruction in the right-of-way ordered to remove it. Otherwise, the abutter could sue the municipality, alleging that its property was taken without due process of law and without payment of just compensation. The municipality also might remind the abutter, in the written notice to remove the obstruction, that the abutter could be liable for property damage and personal injury caused by the obstruction.

### Conclusion

Roadsides can be just as dangerous as the roads themselves if they are not well designed or maintained. Towns and cities should become aware of the roadside hazards in their boundaries and take steps to eliminate or protect them.

# “Best Management Practices” for Snow and Ice Control in Maine... from an environmental perspective

Some Maine towns & cities have been asking “will salt be outlawed?” or “will sand/salt applications be regulated in Maine in the near future?”

The answers are unknown at this point and are likely to be “no” in the immediate future. However, many “MS4 towns” in Maine have already been dealing with this subject relative to stormwater runoff. It was this sort of concern that led to the creation of this new Manual over the last few years. It was prepared by many Maine personnel including many municipal officials, soil & water conservation folks, a few DOT folks, and many more.



Piles of wasted winter sand

The purpose of this manual is to present tools and best practices for snow and ice control, when they should be used, and their limitations. The manual establishes clear and consistent guidelines for municipalities and contractors to achieve an acceptable level of service balanced with cost and environmental impacts of chlorides and abrasives on Maine’s land and water resources. It promotes the understanding of the tools, best practices, and limitations for snow and ice control.

The manual will also help snow and ice control professionals increase their understanding of when to use, and when not to use, *these tools and*



Sand on snowpacked pavement

practices. In addition, it encourages progressive changes in snow and ice control practices that will help reduce salt/sand use and environmental impacts while meeting the safety and mobility needs of roadway users. By adopting and following the standards, snow and ice control professionals can show due diligence in their snow removal practices. This manual provides options for consideration and presents decision makers with a set of best management practices (BMP) that have the potential to reduce the misuse of chlorides and potentially limit the impacts of chlorides or abrasives on infrastructure investments, such as equipment, vehicles and the environment without reducing the level of service.



Bare pavement from early salt application

### What does the manual cover?

This field handbook includes suggestions for improved practices, such as anti-icing, pre-wetting, and pretreating, and standard best practices in quality snow and ice

control programs that are likely to result in identifying the right amount of product being spread and minimizing reapplication requirements.

**This manual provides the following information for each BMP:**

- What is the BMP?
- How does it work?
- How is the BMP implemented?
- What are the planning or technical considerations?
- What are the potential benefits?
- What is the cost to implement the BMP?

If you or your town is interested in getting one or more copies, please send an email to [local.web@maine.gov](mailto:local.web@maine.gov) or call the Center at 1-800-498-9133. It is also on the website at [www.maine.gov/mdot/csd/mlrc/technical/winterplowsand/index.htm](http://www.maine.gov/mdot/csd/mlrc/technical/winterplowsand/index.htm)

NOW AVAILABLE!

WRITTEN FOR MAINE TOWNS,  
CITIES OR CONTRACTORS

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# 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Skowhegan Highway Congress • June 2, 2016

## “Time-Out for Training” Prize Winners

WINNERS	LOCATION	PRIZE	COMPANY
Andrea Glidden	MDOT	\$50 Gift Card	Howard P. Fairfield, LLC.
Angela Dow	Auburn	\$50 Cabella's Gift Card	Wright-Pierce
Anthony Rossignol	Winslow	\$25 DD Gift Card	O'Connor Motors
Art Berkoski	MDOT-Presque Isle	Hat	Jordan Equipment
Ben Campbell	Livermore	Gift Card	DJ's Municipal Supply Inc.
Bob Boulay	MDOT-Region 3	\$15 DD Gift Card	Gilly's Grader
Bob Sidelinger	MDOT	Hat	Jordan Equipment
Bob Watson	MDOT	\$25 DD Gift Card	O'Connor Motors
Brian Turner	Monson	TBD	Traction Heavy Duty
Brian Whiting	MDOT	EW160D Kid's Digger	Chadwick-BaRoss, Inc.
Charlie Bess	Skowhegan	\$50 LL Bean Gift Card	Freightliner & Western Star of ME
Chris Rushton	MDOT-Region 2	Hat	Jordan Equipment
Chuck Briggs	Lincoln	\$25 Home Depot Gift Card	Unique Paving Materials
Clyde Ayotte	Skowhegan	\$25 LL Bean Gift Card	Auction International
Corey Hutchinson	Wilton	Glow in dark safety vest	Worksafe Traffic Control
Corey Johnson	Skowhegan	\$50 Gift Card	Whittemore & Sons
Corey Murphy	Jay	Shovel kit	DJ's Municipal Supply Inc.
Dale Roberts	Wilton	Hat	Jordan Equipment
Dan Libby	Freeport	\$25 Gift Certificate	Trask-Decrow Machinery, Inc.
David Chase	MDOT	Polarized safety glasses	CCP
David Wormwood	Freeport	Home Depot Gift Card	Franklin Paint Co., Inc.
Dennis McNeil	N. Jay	\$25 Hannaford Gift Card	Portland North Truck Center
Derek Littlefield	Gorham	\$25 Gift Card	Montage Enterprises
Drew W.	Portland	Bibeau Fleece Blanket	Bangor Truck Equipment
Duane Whittemore	Skowhegan	Hat	Jordan Equipment
Dylan Paron	Winslow	\$50 LL Bean Gift Card	Keeper North America
Eric Stevens	Lincoln	Hat	Jordan Equipment
Francis Godin	MDOT-Region 5	Hat	Jordan Equipment
Fred Richards	Jay	\$25 Lowe's Gift Card	Beauregard Equipment, Co.
Garnet Ricker	Sangerville	\$25 DD Gift Card	AEBI New England, LLC
George Johnston	MDOT	\$75 Gift Card for propane	Maine Oxy
Greg Given	Livermore Falls	TBD	Traction Heavy Duty
James Provost	Winthrop	Home Depot Gift Card	Franklin Paint Co., Inc.
Jeremy Richards	Jay	\$25 Gift Card	Sebago Technics, Inc.
Jesse Dodge Jr.	Winslow	\$25 Hannaford Gift Card	C.N. Wood Company
Joe Travis	MDOT-Knox	Home Depot Gift Card	Franklin Paint Co., Inc.
John Masse	Wilton	TBD	Dukes Root Control
Keith Frost	Winthrop	\$25 Hannaford Gift Card	C.N. Wood Company
Keith Hall	Windsor	Home Depot Gift Card	Franklin Paint Co., Inc.
Kelly Gorham	Freeport	Bibeau Leather Bag	Bangor Truck Equipment
Ken LaVallee	Bath	1 XL Sweat Shirts	PIKE Industries, Inc.
Ken Toothaker	Wilton	Hot/cold cooler	Daigle & Houghton
Kevin DeLong	MDOT	TBD	J.F. McDermott, Corp.
Kirk Kear	Winslow	2 Sets Box Seats Sea Dogs	Messer Truck Equipment
Kyle Burns	Augusta	\$50 Cabella's Gift Card	Ti-Sales
Lane Gould	Augusta	Hat	Jordan Equipment
Lucas Butler	Monson	Plow Guides	Winter Equipment Company, Inc.
Mark Albert	MDOT	Hat	Jordan Equipment
Mark Kearby	MDOT- Presque	Hat	Jordan Equipment
Matt Gagnon	Bath	Hat	Jordan Equipment
Matthew Mank	MDOT	Hat	Jordan Equipment
Matthew Scott	MDOT	North 50 person first aid kit.	N.H. Braggs & Sons
Michael Wing	Auburn	Polarized safety glasses	CCP
Moe Labbe	Winslow	Golf Shirt	Ted Berry Company, Inc.
Noel Skelton	Auburn	4-season jacket	Jimar Construction Products LLC
Norm Haggan	MDOT-Region 3	\$50 LL Bean Gift Card	Freightliner & Western Star of ME
Paul Gilmour	Portland	\$100 Gift Certificate	Maine Water Works Supply Corp.
Peter Drummond	Sangerville	\$50 Gift Card	Howard P. Fairfield, LLC.
Radu Moldovan	Bath	TBD	Dukes Root Control
Randy Butterfield	MDOT	1 XL Sweat Shirts	PIKE Industries, Inc.
Randy Nutt	Livermore	Polarized safety glasses	CCP
Reg Berube	Auburn	\$15 DD Gift Card	Gilly's Grader

...WINNERS continued from page 4

**WINNERS**

Richard Rogers  
 Rick Clawson  
 Robert Quirion  
 Ryan Bradstreet  
 Ryan Campbell  
 Sean Farnsworth  
 Shane Ireland  
 Shaughn Millett  
 Steve Harrington  
 Steve Kimball  
 Steve Nason  
 Steve Stone  
 Steve Taylor  
 Terence Robichaud  
 Timothy Coston  
 Travis Davis-Morin  
 Tyson Tash  
 Warren Smith  
 William Davis

**LOCATION**

Winslow  
 Monson  
 Winslow  
 Winslow  
 MDOT Guilford  
 MDOT  
 MDOT Ashland  
 Lincoln  
 MDOT  
 Dexter  
 MDOT  
 MDOT  
 MDOT  
 Bangor  
 Auburn  
 Windsor  
 Auburn  
 Lincoln  
 Livermore Falls  
 Richmond

**PRIZE**

\$25 LL Bean Gift Card  
 \$15 DD Gift Card  
 Jacket  
 TBD  
 \$25 Gift Card  
 2 sets Box Seats Sea Dogs  
 TBD  
 \$25 Hannaford Gift Card  
 Light Bar  
 First-Aid kit  
 Hat  
 \$25 Lowe's Gift Card  
 \$25 DD Gift Card  
 Pair work boots-u pick from trailer  
 \$25 Hannaford Gift Card  
 BBQ Grilling Set  
 Gift Card  
 \$25 DD Gift Card  
 Hat

**COMPANY**

Auction International  
 Gilly's Grader  
 Daigle & Houghton  
 Northland JCB/Nitco  
 Sebago Technics, Inc.  
 Messer Truck Equipment  
 Northland JCB/Nitco  
 Portland North Truck Center  
 Hews Company, LLC.  
 DJ's Municipal Supply Inc.  
 Jordan Equipment  
 Beaugard Equipment, Co.  
 AEBI New England, LLC  
 Pine Tree Orthopedic Lab Inc.  
 Portland North Truck Center  
 Airgas, USA  
 DJ's Municipal Supply Inc.  
 O'Connor Motors  
 Jordan Equipment



**Looking for help or advice or want to be notified???**

**Check out our Local Roads Center website for technical info on:**

- Paving specs and figuring quantities • Gravel road grading or ditching specs
- Street name signs • Plowing/sanding/salting • Drainage issues • Speed limits
- Posting roads for weight • Trees in the right-of-way • And MUCH more!

Go to... [www.maine.gov/mdot/csd/mlrc/technical/index.htm](http://www.maine.gov/mdot/csd/mlrc/technical/index.htm)

**Looking for updates from the MaineDOT or when the Maine Local Roads Center announces Workshops.**

Go to...

[www.maine.gov/mdot/](http://www.maine.gov/mdot/)

and enter your email, press go and whenever there is a change made to the website, like MLRC announcing a workshop, you will be notified by email.

**Sign Up for notifications**

...LAWS continued from page 1

### GAS PIPELINE INSTALLATIONS

**LD 1124 – An Act To Manage Risks Associated with the Installation of Natural Gas Pipelines. PL 2015, c. 216.** This Act establishes construction standards for the installation of natural gas pipelines that would be applied to all gas utilities. The Act: (1) expressly requires a gas utility to provide notice of an installation to all other owners of facilities within the right-of-way when it applies for an installation permit to the municipality or other permitting authority; (2) authorizes the owners of the other infrastructure buried in the right-of-way to file objections with the permitting authority within 14 days; and (3) provides that the MaineDOT Utility Accommodation Rules serve as the minimum rules governing the gas line installation standards in the compact areas of urban compact municipalities and as the default construction standards with respect to all other local roads unless otherwise specified by municipal ordinance. The minimum separation standard in the MaineDOT rule is 3 feet (horizontal) and 1 foot (vertical), with pipe crossings to be as close to 90 degrees as possible. The Act provides that the local licensing authority that is relying on the MaineDOT rules may grant exceptions to the standards upon a finding that one or more of the following circumstances exists: (1) the MaineDOT standards would present an exceptional hardship or unreasonable cost, (2) all affected parties to the installation have agreed to alternative standards that adequately ensure public safety, (3) a unique situation exists that requires an adjustment to the standards in a manner that ensures public safety, or (4) the location standards exceed the limits of the available space within the right-of-way.

### PASSING “EMERGENCY VEHICLES” ON ROADWAYS

**LD 196 – An Act To Ensure the Safety of Public Service Vehicles. PL 2015, c. 32.** Current law requires motorists to attempt to use a nonadjacent travel lane, if safely possible, when passing certain stationary emergency vehicles in or adjacent to a roadway while attending an emergency. This bill expands the number and types of vehicles to which the requirement applies to include all “public service vehicles.” A public service vehicle is defined as a vehicle used to assist members of the public or law enforcement officers with disabled vehicles or to remove debris from a roadway, or a vehicle used to construct, maintain, inspect or repair utility infrastructure, including, but not limited to, electricity, water, sewer, cable, telephone, gas and natural gas infrastructure. Public service vehicles also include wreckers.

### DAMAGING PUBLIC EASEMENT ROADS

**LD 1074 – An Act To Make Damaging a Public Easement with a Motor Vehicle a Class E Crime. PL 2015, c. 258.** This Act establishes the offense of operating a motor vehicle to damage a public easement as a Class E crime as the term “public easement” is defined in law, essentially to include all local roads for which the obligation for municipal maintenance has been either formally discontinued or discontinued by abandonment and the public easement has been retained. It is not a crime if damage to a public easement is caused by a law enforcement officer or responder acting in accordance with their respective duties.

## 2015 LAWS

### DISCONTINUING A ROAD

**LD 1325 – An Act To Ensure a Public Process When Discontinuing or Abandoning a Public Road. (Sponsored by Rep. Nadeau of Winslow.)** Mandate Enacted; PL 2015, c. 464 This Act amends the law governing the process of discontinuing a “town way” to municipal maintenance in several ways. First, the Act provides more guidelines to the formal discontinuation process by providing a standard for proper notification of abutters of the town way in question (U.S. first class mail, postage prepaid) as well as the required contents of the discontinuation order to be

considered by the municipal legislative body (e.g., town meeting or town or city council). The Act also requires one public meeting of the municipal officers to discuss the discontinuation order as well as a subsequent public hearing to be held at least 10 days before the discontinuation order is taken up by the municipal legislative body. More directly than is the case in current law, the Act requires the municipality to file the discontinuation order in the registry of deeds after it is approved by the legislative body. Second, the Act requires the municipal officers to file in the registry any determination that they may make identifying a town way or segment of a town way that has been discontinued by abandonment (i.e., after 30 years of non-maintenance), and provide a copy of that recording to the MaineDOT. The Act stipulates that the absence of such a filing cannot be construed as evidence against the road’s abandoned status. Third, the Act encourages municipalities to develop or update inventories relating to all town ways or segments of town ways formally discontinued or discontinued by abandonment, and to share such inventories with the MaineDOT. The inventories being encouraged are expected to include sufficient descriptions of the former town ways, the date of discontinuance, the governmental entity effecting the discontinuance, any known judicial determinations regarding the status of the public easement and, in the case of abandonment, the last known date of regular, publicly-funded maintenance. The Act also creates for the owner of property abutting a discontinued or abandoned road in which a public easement exists a right to bring a civil action in Superior Court for damages and injunctive relief against a person who causes damage to the public easement that impedes reasonable access. Law enforcement officers and emergency responders acting within the scope of their authority are immune from such civil complaints.

### ROADSIDE SIGNS

**LD 1592 – An Act To Amend the Maine Traveler Information Services Law. PL 2015, c. 403.** In response to a U.S. Supreme Court decision decided in 2015 (Reed v. Town of Gilbert), this Act significantly amends the statute governing the placement of what are referred to as “categorical signs” both within and outside of the public right of way in order to regulate in a content neutral manner, as the Supreme Court decision generally required. Specifically, the Act deletes references in the current law to: (1) signs showing the place and time of service or meetings of religious and civic organizations; (2) memorial signs or tablets; (3) signs bearing political messages relating to an election, primary or referendum; (4) signs erected by a producer that directs travelers to the location where farm and food products are grown; and (5) signs erected for a farmers’ market that are directional in nature.

Instead of referring to allowable signs by content, the Act provides that any temporary sign bearing a non-commercial message and not exceeding 4 feet by 8 feet in size may be placed in the right-of-way for a maximum of six weeks per calendar year. The temporary sign may not be placed within 30 feet of another temporary sign bearing the same or substantially same message. Each temporary sign must be labeled with the name and address of the individual, organization or entity that placed the sign within the public right-of-way and the designated time period the sign will be maintained there. The Act similarly repeals the content-based elements of current signage law governing the placement of signs outside of the right of way and replaces the previous language with a content-neutral standard allowing the installation and maintenance of signs no greater than 50 square feet in size, without time limitation. The Act also establishes a civil violation subject to a fine of not more than \$250 against anyone who takes, defaces or disturbs a sign legally placed within the public right-of-way without the authority to do so.



# ANNOUNCING

## The Maine Local Roads Center email listserv

This new electronic mailing list is for open discussion among municipal/state/county personnel who are associated with local road or bridge issues, public works, and any other local road concern. You can connect with your colleagues to openly discuss any issue that you need advice or technical assistance with in your town/city.

For instance:

- Does your town use plastic culverts?
- Do you need some advice from other municipal users of a certain truck model?
- How does crack sealing work for your town?
- Who's using liquid brine for winter roads?
- Anyone got a decent policy on mailbox replacement?

This new tool is available at: [mailman.informe.org/mailman/listinfo/maine-local-roads-center-listserv](http://mailman.informe.org/mailman/listinfo/maine-local-roads-center-listserv) (or search for "Maine local roads listserv")

This listserv is a VALUABLE RESOURCE to talk to your town/city counterparts across Maine. Before your town makes an important road decision, ask other town officials around Maine first. After your registration to the listserv is confirmed, to send a message to members, email to: [maine-local-roads-center-listserv@lists.maine.gov](mailto:maine-local-roads-center-listserv@lists.maine.gov).

This listserv is hosted by the State of Maine through the Maine Local Roads Center within MainedOT. Any questions can be directed to [local.web@maine.gov](mailto:local.web@maine.gov) or 1-800-498-9133.

*This list is not to be used for the purpose of solicitation of products, although products may be discussed for the purpose of providing support to other members.*

## Traffic Signs—how does your town manage them?

The National MUTCD is the standard for all signs, pavement markings, etc. for all roads open to public travel in Maine and every state. Every town/city should have a copy of this Manual for frequent reference. It is also online at [www.mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/](http://www.mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/). The Center has sold many of these Manuals to Maine towns and have many more for sale at the "wicked good" price of only \$40.

In May 2012, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) completed its review of nationwide public comments relative to certain deadlines for sign reflectivity for all types of roadway signs. The effective date of their ruling was June 13, 2012 and all agencies had 2 years to adopt a method. Specific details on sign reflectivity can be found in the MUTCD Table I-2 in the Introduction, and Table 2A-3 in Section 2A.08.

For Maine towns and cities, it's important to understand that compliance with this standard is achieved by having an "assessment or management method" in place. In other words, someone needs to review the quality of road



signs along your municipal roads. The best way to review all your signs is to develop an inventory... hopefully computer-based. This Standard does NOT imply all signs need to be replaced. The intent is to identify and replace signs that no longer meet the needs of nighttime drivers. Are they still reflective or are they so old that no one can see them at night (or maybe during the day too)?



The MaineDOT Traffic Division has chosen the Management Method entitled "expected sign life". Typically this means that individual signs are labeled with small stickers to mark the date of fabrication or installation. There are a variety of means of "assessment" from visual inspection of signs all the way up to computerized programs and using retroreflective meters.

The Center now has easy to use sign inventory software for municipal use to help towns/cities meet this requirement. See "Managing Town Roads" on page 1. "The "bottom line", Identify and replace old or nonreflective signs!"

# MAINE LOCAL ROADS CENTER

Community Services Division • MaineDOT

16 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

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*Any findings, conclusions or recommendations presented in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of FHWA or MaineDOT.*

This is a newsletter about local roads, it is written to assist Maine municipalities in dealing with transportation related concerns.

- Other resources which are available from the Center include:
- Statewide workshops on a wide variety of subjects
  - The Maine "Roads Scholar" program
  - A large library of videotapes and publications which are either free or available at a very nominal cost
  - Practical advice and technical support by phone, email, or website
  - A traveling "Road Ranger" who can provide local training or advice
  - Several software programs for managing road maintenance, equipment maintenance, or sign maintenance.

The Maine Local Roads Center is part of the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) - a nationwide effort jointly funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the various state departments of transportation, and state universities. Its purpose is to decode technical information on roads, streets, bridges and public transportation and put it into a form that is useful to local government personnel.

The Maine Local Roads Center is sponsored by the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) and FHWA. This newsletter is intended to keep you informed about training opportunities in the form of workshops and seminars and about publications, techniques or products that might help you in your work. It will also provide a place where useful information can be exchanged among Maine towns on whatever road and street related topics are of interest to you.

Peter M. Coughlan, Director

## STAFF

Jerry Douglass, Program Manager  
Bob Stevens, Technical Assistant  
Sandy Noonan, Program Assistant  
Phil Curtis, "Road Ranger"

MAINE LOCAL ROADS CENTER