



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314-1000

CECW-CO-D

JUN 17 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDERS, MAJOR SUBORDINATE COMMANDS AND
DISTRICT COMMANDS; CHIEFS, CONSTRUCTION - OPERATIONS DIVISIONS

SUBJECT: Glare from Waterways Signs

1. Towing industry representatives have stated safety concerns over encountering excessive glare from certain (high-intensity retro-reflective) signs at approaches to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers locks. The resulting night blindness is one of several issues that we are discussing with the towing industry as part of MG Riley's Inland Navigation Safety Initiative.

2. We need to develop a list of glare problem signs at locks by working with Corps navigation staff, district sign managers, and towing industry stakeholder organizations at the regional and district levels. The National Sign Program staff is developing alternatives and will seek demonstration opportunities to test revised signs. Your participation in these demonstrations is encouraged. Once alternatives are approved, actions to move or replace these problem signs can be taken as outlined in the enclosed National Sign Program memorandum.

3. My POCs for this issue are Mr. Rick Magee, National Sign Program Manager, St. Paul District, (651) 290-5578; Mr. Timothy Grundhoffer, National Technical Adviser, St. Paul District, (651) 290-5574; or Mr. Michael Kidby, National Sign Program Proponent for Waterways Signs, HQUSACE, (202) 761-0250.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

Encl
as

Lawrence A. Lang
for
MICHAEL G. ENSCH
Chief, Operations
Directorate of Civil Works

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF OF OPERATIONS AND REGULATORY
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (CECW-CO)

SUBJECT: Glare from Waterway Signs

1. The National Sign Program Mandatory Center for Expertise (MCX) recommends managers of Corps navigation facilities determine if there is a glare problem from high-intensity retroreflective signs and take recommended corrective actions.
2. Towing industry representatives have complained about the glare from USACE waterway signs at some lock approaches. Glare is a problem during night time operation at some lock approaches where highly reflective waterway signs are installed at landing or target areas used by towboat pilots. These locations are spotted with tow boat spot lights to assist during lockage. Excessive glare from spot lights can reflect back off signs, and white reflective signs tend to wash-out the area around the sign. The magnitude of the problem will depend on the direction of the spot light beam, proximity to the sign, size of the sign, color and type or grade of reflective sheeting. Field tests by the Sign Program MCX have confirmed these problems.
3. Problematic glare at any USACE lock projects should be addressed using the following corrective actions:
 - a. Identify the landing or target areas used by the towing industry at lock approaches. Coordinate with them to identify if problematic glare is occurring
 - b. Review project sign plans to eliminate/minimize the use of high grade retro-reflective (Diamond Grade™ by 3M or Omni-View™ by Avery) signage in industry target areas. As an alternative, lower grade sheeting may be considered when signs are necessary in target areas. Should any lower grade sheeting be deemed necessary, its use must be approved by the district sign program manager and documented in the project sign plan.
 - c. Plan waterway sign layouts to avoid highly reflective signs in the vicinity of structural features or areas that are used as approach targets.

4. Please direct any questions or requests for technical support regarding problematic glare at lock sites to the National Sign Program MCX, St Paul District. Points of Contact for the MCX are listed below:

Rick Magee
National Sign Program Manager 651-290-5578

Timothy Grundhoffer, PE
National Technical POC 651-290-5574

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Magee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

RICK MAGEE
National Sign Program Manager

cf: Tim Grundhoffer, CEMVP-EC-D
Mike Kidby, CECW-CO
Debra Stokes, CECW-CO