

NOTICE OF PROPOSED GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

Connector May 2018 newsletter

Pursuant to Wis. Stat. s. 227.112, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation is hereby seeking comment on Connector May 2018 newsletter [Wis. Stat. ch. 346], a proposed guidance document.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

Comments may be submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for 21 days by:

1. Department's website: <https://appengine.egov.com/apps/wi/dot/guidance-docs?guidDocId=OPA163>

2. Mailing written comments to:
Office of Public Affairs
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
4822 Madison Yards Way
PO Box 7910
Madison, WI 53707-7910

WEBSITE LOCATION OF FINAL GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

The final version of this guidance document will be posted at wisconsin.dot.gov to allow for ongoing comment.

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Police Unity Tour honors fallen law enforcement officers

Annual bike ride raises funds for the National Law Enforcement Memorial Museum

[Rob Miller](#) -
May 23

"We ride for
those who

died.”

That’s the motto for participants in the annual Police Unity Tour held May 9 – 12, 2018, from East Hanover, New Jersey to Washington, D.C.



From left: retired Wisconsin State Patrol Sergeant Kevin Lynch, Trooper Matt Houser, Major Tony Burrell, Kevin Casper (father of Trooper Trevor Casper who died in the line of duty on March 24, 2015), and Colonel Chuck Teasdale.

This year’s 300-mile, four-day bike ride included 39 Wisconsin riders representing current and retired law enforcement along with family of fallen officers. In addition to honoring those who died in the line of duty, the event raised funds for the National Law Enforcement Memorial and Museum in Washington, D.C.

The inaugural bike tour in 1997 involved 18 riders who raised \$18,000. This year, 2,800 riders generated pledges and donations totaling about \$2.2 million. Dedicated in 1991, the National Law Enforcement Memorial contains the names of more than 21,000 U.S. law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty over the course of U.S. history. An adjacent museum is under construction and expected to open this fall. Wisconsin officers honored as part of the 2018 Police Unity Tour include:

Eric Lyons with the Cuba City Police Department who died from a heart attack in November of 2015 after responding to a fire-related call.

Jason Weiland with the Everest Metro Police Department who was shot and killed while responding to a domestic disturbance in Marathon County on March 22, 2017.

Wisconsin State Trooper Anthony Borostowski who was fatally injured April 11, 2017, when his patrol vehicle left a Sauk County highway and struck a tree.

Current and former Wisconsin State Patrol officers who participated in this year’s Police Unity Tour included Colonel Charles Teasdale, Major Anthony Burrell, Trooper Matt Houser and retired State Patrol Sergeant Kevin Lynch.

“As we traveled from one community to the next, we’d pick up more and more riders, and the reception we’d get from emergency responders and citizens along the way was amazing,” according to Major Burrell. “One morning, as we passed the New Jersey State Police Somerville Barracks, about a dozen uniformed officers were standing at attention and saluting. It was a powerful reminder that as law enforcement officers, we come from a variety of states, agencies and backgrounds, but we all share a common, unbreakable bond.”

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Much more than a truck scale, SWEFs are central to public safety



The Superior SWEF acted as a staging point for Wisconsin State Patrol, Douglas County Sheriff and Superior Police Department while working along with local fire and emergency response crews responding to the April 2018 explosion and fire at Husky Energy refinery.

Superior acted as emergency staging point during 2016 floods, 2018 refinery explosion

David Hunt - May 22

Managing the recent fire and explosion at a Superior refinery required multiple emergency response units working long hours. Along with battling the fire itself, first responders needed to evacuate people from homes and businesses in the nearby area. There were hazmat concerns, as well. First responders used the [Safety and Weight Enforcement Facility](#) (SWEF) near the crossroads of US 2 and 53 as a strategic staging point for response.



The building, opened in mid-2016, was designed to accommodate incident command operations. In addition to modernized truck scales, the building has administrative space, enhanced communications, added parking and emergency generators.

"In planning this new building, the department wanted to be forward-thinking about what could best serve the immediate public in an emergency," said Captain Brian Ausloos with the Wisconsin State Patrol's Motor Carrier Enforcement Section. "In any emergency, seconds and minutes matter, so it's important to have space ready for planning, coordination and communication."

Wisconsin DOT has 13 SWEFs throughout the state. Superior's is among the newest, with the latest SWEF [opening in Sparta](#) last October. Like in Superior, Sparta's SWEF replaced an obsolete structure more than 50 years old and can function as an incident command center. Other newer generation SWEFs are operating in Kenosha, Beloit and Madison.

Superior's first call to action as an incident command center came just as it was opening in 2016, during heavy flooding that closed multiple roads including US 2 and led Governor Scott Walker to declare a state of emergency in eight northern counties. Roadway repairs were ongoing for several months in some areas.

Emergency response is an additional function atop the SWEFs [primary role of highway safety](#). The facilities are designed for the Wisconsin State Patrol to efficiently weigh and inspect large trucks, under a broader goal of protecting highways from undue wear and tear and enhancing public safety by identifying unsafe trucks and commercial drivers.

For example, roughly 2,800 commercial trucks pass the Sparta location on a typical day. It's

estimated that number will grow beyond 4,000 in the next decade.

WisDOT's goal is to keep that freight traffic moving as safely and efficiently as possible. The newer generation SWEFs include automatic vehicle identification systems to allow pre-screened commercial vehicles to bypass the facility using in-cab transponders. There are also in-motion scales to help measure truck weight as it's moving, with trucks identified as potentially overweight being directed to the scales. A [Wisconsin DOT video](#) shows Wisconsin State Patrol inspectors in action at a SWEF.

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Roadway safety is responsibility of farmers, motorists alike

Wisconsin DOT - May 15

As planting season ramps up, motorists and farm equipment operators need to remember the importance of being safe as they share Wisconsin roads. Between 2011 and 2016, there were 1,018 crashes involving agricultural equipment resulting in 517 injuries and 16 deaths.



"Heightened awareness and patience during the busy field times applies to everyone," said [Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation](#) President Jim Holte. "At the end of the day, farmers and motorists alike want to return home to their families. Safety has to be a top priority for everyone sharing the road." Practicing awareness and caution as well as extending basic driving courtesies during the planting season can go far toward ensuring that Wisconsin roadways are

safe.

It's important for farming equipment operators to know the limitations that their vehicles have when driving on roadways and to maintain constant awareness of motorists around them. This, in addition to ensuring that equipment is safe for road travel and compliant with [lighting and marking requirements](#), is vital to the safety of everyone on the road.

Patience is an important trait for motorists to practice during planting season. Tractors and other large farm equipment often move slower than posted speed limits and their nontraditional roadway entrance and exit points to and from adjacent farmland can come unexpectedly. Road awareness should be part of every motorists' regular driving habits, but this becomes especially important when traveling in rural areas where agricultural equipment and other [implements of animal husbandry](#) (IOH) are about.

When drivers see the fluorescent orange slow-moving vehicle (SMV) emblem on the rear of a tractor or other piece of agricultural equipment, the first thing to do is slow down and assume equipment operators cannot see them. Driving distraction free is a rule that should be abided by whenever stepping behind the wheel, but it is especially important when sharing the road with agricultural equipment. Because of their larger sizes and heavier weights, these machines handle differently than automobiles. They are less agile and take longer to stop, so paying attention and following at a farther distance is important. Extending your following distance is also important as debris may fall from trucks.

Passing an IoH should be done only when it is safe and legal to do so. [Wisconsin law](#) makes it illegal

for motorists to pass slow moving agricultural equipment in a no passing zone, so pass machinery only in passing zones when it is safe to do so and never pass on the shoulder.

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Plenty of preparation precedes historic Sturgeon Bay granary bridge crossing

Terry Walsh - May 7

Wisconsin DOT's [Over Size Over Weight](#) (OSOW) Permit Section is often involved in preserving history.

A frequent number of projects involve moving historic buildings from their original locations, usually destined for development, to new locations better suited for their historic charm. So when a 117-year-old Sturgeon Bay granary, weighing about 300,000 pounds and standing 64-feet tall needed to be moved across the city's Maple-Oregon draw bridge, OSOW was there to help make it happen.

"We reviewed the condition of the bridge," said Wisconsin DOT Structural Engineer Kelly Young. "We then carefully reviewed the configuration of the load and compared the amount of force imposed on the bridge by the load with the current capacity of the bridge."

The OSOW Permits Section worked closely with Wisconsin DOT's [Bureau of Structures](#) Rating Unit to determine that the structure could handle the load and how best to distribute the weight for the safest crossing. Pulling from their understanding of the structural behavior of many similar draw bridge designs, Young said they reviewed design calculations before approving the granary crossing. With this approval, the giant Sturgeon Bay landmark was set atop remote-control dollies and moved across the Maple-Oregon Bridge. One thing that Young said made the move challenging was its dimensions.

"Usually, we are analyzing oversize/overweight trucks – vehicles that you are used to seeing on the road every day," said Young. "This was a 40-foot wide, 50-foot long unit being moved by power dollies that were hand-controlled." The unique configuration made communication with the OSOW Permits office key, ensuring that everyone understood the process.



The 117-year-old granary creeps its way across Maple-Oregon Bridge.



The vehicle used to move the giant structure was a Buckingham BU-173 remote control power unit. This unit is used either manually or by remote control and handles all functions for the load, including raising, lowering, steering, breaking and driving. For this move, the operator carried the wireless remote while walking around the building to observe its progress. Pre-move route preparation included removing traffic lights from the east side of the bridge for clearance.

Speed was among the things considered in moving the giant granary over the bridge. Move too fast and the combination of speed and weight may create a bounce along the span. Fortunately, this

was not an issue as the granary's travel speed was slower than the approximately 5 mph limit required to minimize a bounce effect.

The atmosphere along the route itself was festive as residents of all ages came out to experience a bit of history on the move. Scout Feldman, 14, of Sturgeon Bay, in a [Green Bay Press Gazette story](#), expressed excitement of being present for the historical event.

"Years from now, I can say, 'I saw that building go across a bridge.'"

While the plan for the granary is to renovate and restore the structure, the immediate goal is putting a new roof on the facility, according to the Press Gazette story.

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Crash survivor's story shows why everyone has a part in motorcycle safety

May is National Motorcycle Awareness Month

Joe Starr - May 2

Terry Russell was out for a weekend motorcycle ride with friends, enjoying a straight stretch of road in Columbia County Wisconsin's rich farm country when the driver of the car in front of them, without warning, slammed on the brakes while trying to avoid trash bags lying in the road.



Russell before a recent Saturday ride with friends. He replaced several parts on his Harley following the crash about 20 years ago and has been riding it ever since.

There was little time to react as the motorcyclists dodged to avoid the car, one another and debris now scattered on the road from the trash bags that exploded as the car ran over them. One of the riders entered the ditch and corrected before safely stopping. Other riders maneuvered through the debris scattered over the roadway. Russell, who had his 10-year-old son Kyle on the back of his bike, hit the back of the lead rider's bike.

"When I hit him, my handle bars went [sideways] and we went down, sliding on the highway," said Russell, recalling the crash nearly 20 years later while sitting at the dining room table of his Cottage Grove, Wis. home. A large tattoo he got after the crash covers much of his scarred right bicep, which took the brunt of the impact with the pavement.

Eyes out for motorcycles

May is National Motorcycle Awareness Month.

As weather continues to improve, Wisconsin's 535,000 licensed motorcyclists will be pulling out on Wisconsin roads. For drivers, this means expanding their scope of awareness to be on the lookout for these low profile vehicles.

"Because of their smaller profile, it's easy to misjudge the speed and distance of an approaching motorcycle," said Wisconsin DOT Bureau of Transportation Safety Director David Pabst. "That's why we ask car and truck drivers to [look twice for motorcycles](#) before pulling out from a stop sign, turning left at an intersection or changing lanes." Taking extra care to be on the lookout for bikes

and giving them extra space when they are nearby is good practice for all drivers. This becomes especially important in busy metropolitan areas or during rush hours when distractions are plentiful.

Where's Kyle?

Once Russell finally came to rest on that highway after the crash, his first thought was for his son. As they were going down, Kyle had come off the seat and over the top of his dad. The next thing he heard was his son crying, and a sigh of relief came over him as he looked over to see Kyle lying next to him. He looked him over for injuries and not seeing any, pulled him free from the wrecked bike. Aside from the trauma of being flung from the saddle at 55 mph and dragged along the pavement for several hundred feet, he only had a small spot of road rash on one hand. Deep scrapes on his helmet told what could have been a much worse situation had he not been wearing protective gear.

"If he hadn't been wearing a helmet, he definitely would have had a head injury, at the least."

Riding responsibly

All motorcyclists in Wisconsin are urged to wear personal protective gear while riding, including a full face helmet, a leather or heavy duty jacket, leather or heavy long pants, over-the-ankle boots, and full finger gloves. A protective face shield attached to the helmet, glasses or goggles is required for all motorcyclists. If the windshield rises 15 or more inches above the handlebars, eye protection is not required but is strongly suggested.

Another part of that protective gear is being mentally prepared to ride. Safely operating a motorcycle requires [training](#), [practice](#), and a high degree of coordination and concentration. Riding while drowsy, drunk, on drugs or otherwise impaired is dangerous and it's illegal.

Motorcyclists are also required to have a Class M license, which is obtained by passing a [Division of Motor Vehicles](#) driving skills test or successfully completing a Wisconsin DOT-approved [rider education course](#). For successfully completing an approved education course, motorcyclists earn a skills test waiver they use to obtain their Class M license.

Awareness: everyone's responsibility

Russell's friends immediately rushed over to make sure he and Kyle were okay. Emergency responders arrived soon after and father and son were transported to the hospital.

For Russell, the biggest takeaway from that day was awareness. He says there is a responsibility for all drivers, including motorcyclists, to [avoid distractions](#) and remain alert to what is coming up on the road. The crash, he said, could have been avoided if the driver would have slowed down well before reaching the road debris and safely drove around.

There is also the question of why the debris was in the road in the first place. The likely answer being that it had fallen from a vehicle where it was [improperly secured](#). A AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety [report](#) estimates that improperly secured loads and roadway debris contributed to an average of 50,658 police reported crashes contributing to 9,805 injuries and 125 deaths annually in the United States from 2011 to 2014.

Wisconsin law provides for a \$200 citation for failure to properly secure a load or for spilling a load or waste along a highway.

"Items that bounce out of trailers or away from trucks such as coolers, chairs, lumber or ladders become dangerous obstacles that can damage other vehicles or result in crashes when drivers swerve suddenly to avoid roadway debris," said Wisconsin State Patrol Superintendent J.D. Lind. "Covering a load is not required by law, but having a cover over a truck bed or trailer will help ensure that any load is properly secured and contained."

Russell repaired his Harley soon after the crash and still has it today. He enjoys driving it to work on nice days and still gets out for those weekend rides.

"You can ride your motorcycle on the same stretch of road you drive your truck every day and have an entirely different experience. Everything has a unique look, sound, smell and feel when you ride. Nothing compares."

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