

## WCHA Best Management Practice for

### Warning Lamps on Certain County or Municipal Highway Department Vehicles

The State legislators recently approved the following revised statute relating to warning lights on highway maintenance equipment.

It is the goal of WCHA to encourage Wisconsin County Highway Departments to implement this new lighting configuration in an organized uniform manner to provide a higher level of safety for operators and the public. A uniform lighting configuration should help motorists recognize a patrol truck anywhere on our highway system.

Date of enactment: **April 15, 2022**

**2021 Senate Bill 508** Date of publication\*: **April 16, 2022**

\* Section 991.11, WISCONSIN STATUTES: Effective date of acts. "Every act and every portion of an act enacted by the legislature over the governor's partial veto which does not expressly prescribe the time when it takes effect shall take effect on the day after its date of publication."

# 2021 WISCONSIN ACT 255

**AN ACT to renumber and amend 347.26 (7); and to create 347.26 (7) (c) of the statutes; relating to: warning lights on highway vehicles.**

*The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:*

**SECTION 1.** 347.26 (7) of the statutes is renumbered 347.26 (7) (intro.) and amended to read:  
347.26 (7) WARNING LAMPS ON CERTAIN HIGHWAY VEHICLES. (intro.) Any vehicle of the department or a county or municipal highway department ~~which~~ that by reason of its use upon a highway creates a vehicular traffic hazard requiring the exercise of unusual care in approaching, overtaking, or passing may be equipped with ~~a~~ any of the following configurations of flashing red or, amber lamp, or green lamps:

(a) A lamp of the dome-light type ~~or with 2 flashing red or amber.~~

(b) Two lamps, one showing to the front and one showing to the rear. ~~Such lamp or~~ The lamps shall be mounted approximately midway between the extremities of the width of the vehicle and at the highest practicable point and shall be used only for the purpose of warning operators of other vehicles of the presence of the traffic hazard.

**SECTION 2.** 347.26 (7) (c) of the statutes is created to read:

347.26 (7) (c) Four lamps, 2 showing to the front and 2 showing to the rear. The lamps showing to the front shall be mounted at the same level and as widely spaced laterally as practicable. The lamps showing to the rear shall be mounted at the same level and as widely spaced laterally as practicable.

/2021/related/acts/255 true acts /2021/related/acts/255 acts/2021/255 acts/2021/255 section true.

The Level of Service Committee has developed the following guidelines for County Highway Departments installing warning lights on highway maintenance vehicles. The goals of these guidelines are:

- Establish lighting configurations that are compliant with the newly adopted State statute.
- Improve the visibility and identification of Highway Maintenance vehicles.
- Establish lighting configurations that will to a large degree provide uniformity for all agencies. Basically, the public will learn to recognize highway maintenance vehicles and react appropriately in any County or jurisdiction.

Recommended Standards:

- 2 amber/green, self-leveling, alternating strobe lights or light bars mounted on either the cab protector or the highest component on a highway maintenance vehicle as widely spaced laterally as possible. These lights should face front and rear and be visible from all directions.
- 2 amber/green alternating strobe lights located on the dump body either side of the tailgate facing the rear of the vehicle in the “top” position, with red stop/turn signals in the center position and white reverse lights in the bottom position.

Additional items to consider:

LED lighting does not generate heat and therefore may become snow covered and ineffective. Consider purchasing heated LED lights.

Wing plows can be hard to see in the dark and drivers may attempt passing a patrol truck with the wing down especially in and around ramp areas. Adding auxiliary green lighting may prevent accidental contact.

Amber, red and green are the only colors approved for warning lights. White lights are typically school buses, reverse lights, and headlights. White lights are not approved warning lights on highway maintenance vehicles.

Some lighting configurations may require controllers or additional equipment to coordinate alternating lighting equipment.

This statute allows green lighting on County or Municipal highway department vehicles. Private plow trucks, tow trucks, and others are not included in this act.



Mini Light Bar Amber/Green/ Amber

Heated Green Strobe Light

Heated Amber Strobe Light

Heated Stop/Tail/ Turn

Heated Oval Back Up Light

Heated Stop/Tail/ Turn

Heated Round Back Up Light

Heated Amber Strobe Light

Heated White Flood Light for Spinner