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NEW TRAFFIC SIGNAL INSPECTION MANUAL ARRIVES

In August, the first 100 printed copies of the new Traffic Signal Inspection Training Manual were delivered. In addition, 60 sets of the manual on CD ROM were delivered. This manual, which took approximately 12 months to complete, was unveiled at the IMSA Annual Conference and School in Hamilton, Ontario where it was used for training.

The inspection manual includes the following eight "general" chapters:

1. Introduction to Traffic Signal Inspection
2. Inspection of Underground Facilities
3. Inspection of Traffic Signal Supports
4. Inspection of Overhead Equipment
5. Inspection of the Vehicular and Pedestrian Detection Systems
6. Inspection of the Controller Assembly
7. Safety Requirements
8. Final Acceptance and Turn-On

Also include as Chapter 11 is a section on Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) requirements for traffic signal inspection. This chapter deals with specific requirements of FDOT, including some items that are unique to the State of Florida. The idea is that, over time, chapters will be added for other states or provinces as interest is shown by those agencies. At the present time, the Texas chapter (Chapter 12) is under development.

Chapters 9 and 10 are being reserved for potential expansion of the "general" chapters. For example, Chapter 9 could end up being a chapter dealing with the inspection of traffic signal communication systems and Chapter 10 might address the inspection of coordinated timing plans.

Although a considerable amount of information is drawn from the Level I and Level II Traffic Signal Training Manuals, there is quite a bit of new and updated information.

As with the Level I and II Traffic Signal Training Manuals, the 3-ring binder concept is used with the written manual, however, unlike the Level I and II manuals the Inspection Manual is in full color with much larger pictures and graphics. The CD ROM version of the manual comes on 7 CD's placed inside a compact (and highly fashionable) storage wallet that holds up to 24 CD's.

The CD ROM was developed using Powerpoint Software and is interactive in nature. Every "slide" in the Powerpoint presentation includes both written text and an audio file and the reader advances from slide to slide at his or her own speed by pointing-and-clicking with a mouse. Some of the slides include animation effects wherein arrows, pictures, stars, and the like, appear on the screen at the appropriate time - complete with supporting sound effects. This animation can be very helpful in communicating certain ideas to the reader. For example, it is much easier to use a series of animated arrows superimposed on a drawing to show how cable is run down the inside of a mast arm pole and out to the controller then it is to try and describe this verbally or in writing. And the sound effects (bullet shots, breaking glass, screeching brakes, etc.) help keep the reader

awake!

Using a laptop computer with external speakers and a modern projector (or an inexpensive video splitter, and a number of color monitors), the CD ROM is a perfect tool for class presentations. No more lugging around a slide projector, slide trays, and a cassette recorder and then worrying about keeping the cassette tape and slide projector in sequence. Also, no more slides getting out of order or upside-down slides.

Powerpoint is not required to run the CD ROM presentation. However, you will need a pentium computer with an SVGA video card, a sound card (with speakers, of course) and at least a 24X CD ROM player. Some older CD ROM players are slower than 24X and will not work while newer CD ROM players are faster than 24X and will work even better.

We have also developed a Moderator's guide, chapter end questions, and two 100 question tests. This is the first IMSA course with more than one test, which will make it more difficult for students to "share" answers with future test takers. (Hopefully, this multiple test concept will be expanded to other IMSA courses.) In addition, a 40 question supplemental test has been developed for the state of Florida and participants must pass this test as well as the 100 question "general" test to be certified in Florida. It appears that FDOT will soon require certification for all traffic signal inspectors working on state projects, which is generating considerable demand for the class in Florida.

IMSA is exploring the idea of developing a cloth Traffic Signal Inspector "patch" for placement on a hat or shirt sleeve as well as supplemental "rocker bars" for each state that would be placed under the patch. The hope is that, at the mere sight of this patch, contractor personnel will properly install all signal equipment out of a dreaded fear of the immense knowledge possessed by the individual wearing the patch. (Well, if that doesn't happen, at least the patch will look good on your shirt or hat.)

Although the inspection manual has undergone several stages of careful review, savvy individuals will undoubtedly discover errors in the manual that have, as of yet, gone undetected. Knowledgeable individuals may also come up with some good ideas for additional entries in the manual, especially as technology changes and new devices and procedures are introduced. To facilitate such input, a comment sheet has been included in the manual which the reader can complete and return to IMSA headquarters. Using these comments, the manual will be periodically updated. You can also leave ideas on IMSA's web page. The 3-ring binding system used for the written manual and the "slide" system used in the CD ROM, both facilitate quick and easy replacement of any page or slide that is changed. With the old system, changing the audio tape and the slides was difficult and time consuming. This is no longer the case with the new system.

The manual and CD ROM were prepared by JW Buckholz Traffic Engineering of Jacksonville, Florida under contract to the IMSA Educational Foundation. We are very excited about this new manual and believe it represents a substantial upgrade to the educational offerings of IMSA.