

## WHAT ARE THE VERTICAL CLEARANCE STANDARDS FOR ROADWAYS?

The “Manual of Uniform Minimum Standards for Design, Construction and Maintenance for Streets and Highways” (the Greenbook) by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) provides minimum standards for vertical clearances over roadways. The FDOT manual states: “Vertical clearances should be adequate for the type of expected traffic. Freeways and major arterials shall have a vertical clearance of at least 16 feet. Other streets and highways should have a clearance of 16 feet unless the provision of a reduced clearance is fully justified by a specific analysis of the situation. Provision for additional clearance (3 to 6 inches) is recommended to allow for future resurfacing.”

The FDOT Greenbook, Table 3-2 presents the height of various types of design vehicles as shown:

<u>Design Vehicle</u>	<u>Height</u>
Passenger Car	4.25 feet
Single Unit Truck	13.5 feet
Single Unit Bus	13.5 feet
Articulated Bus	10.5 feet
Semi-Trailer	13.5 feet

The FDOT “Design Standards for Design, Construction, Maintenance and Utility Operations on the State Highway System” (Standard Indexes) No. 17727, 2 of 2, provides standards for traffic signal head clearance. The document states that “The vertical clearance to the bottom of a vertical or horizontal vehicular signal head shall not be less than 17 feet 6 inches and the maximum height shall be in accordance with the 2000 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices” (MUTCD).

The MUTCD by the U.S. Department of Transportation provides information related to the placement of “Low Clearance Signs” (W12-2 and W12-2P). The MUTCD states:

### Standard:

The Low Clearance (W12-2) sign shall be used to warn road users of clearances less than 12 inches above the statutory maximum vehicle height or minimum structure height.

### Guidance:

The actual clearance should be shown on the Low Clearance sign to the nearest 1 inch not exceeding the actual clearance. However, in areas that experience changes in temperature causing frost action, a reduction, not exceeding 3 inches, should be used for this condition. Where the clearance is less than the legal limit, a sign to that effect should be placed at the nearest intersecting road or wide point in the road at which a vehicle can detour or turn around. In the case of an arch or other structure under which the clearance varies greatly, two or more signs should be used as necessary on the structure itself to give information as to the clearances over the entire roadway. Clearances should be evaluated periodically, particularly when resurfacing operations have occurred.

### Option:

The Low Clearance sign may be installed on or in advance of the structure. If a sign is placed on the structure, it may be a rectangular shape (W12-2P) with the appropriate legend.