

Signs Now News Alert!

A recent ruling by the U.S Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) directly impacts many of our clients thru increased exposure, higher insurance costs and increased tort liability risk. In January 2008, the FHWA amended the United States Code introducing new standards in sign reflectivity. The new ruling applies to all private property that is open to public traffic. ALL of the following types of private businesses and private properties are affected by these new standards; Private Roads, Parking Lots for Shopping Malls and Restaurants, Office Complexes, Apartment and Residential Developments, Sports and Recreation Facilities, Churches, Schools, Medical Facilities, Nursing Homes, and other similar businesses that are open to the public.

So what does the ruling state?

Type 1 Enclosed Lens (Engineer Grade) reflective is no longer to be used on many different types of traffic signs; instead those signs must now be manufactured using Type III (Prismatic High Intensity) reflectivity backgrounds. The purpose of the new minimum reflectivity level requirements and maintenance methods is to promote safety on the nation's streets, highways, roads, and all areas (both public and private) that are open to public traffic.

Below is a summary of what the ruling means to you.

The FHWA's 2007 amendment to the United States Code clarifies that private roads open to public travel are required to comply with the FHWA's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) sign standards. Section 15-116 of the Uniform Vehicle Code states that "No person shall install or maintain in any area of private property used by the public a sign, signal, pavement marking or other devices intended to regulate, warn or guide traffic unless it conforms with the State manual and specifications." In simple terms this means that all owners or managers of private property open to public traffic must install signs and other traffic control devices that comply with all State and Federal regulations, including the new minimum

reflectivity laws. The use of regulated traffic control devices not only ensures compliance to the Federal Standards but also minimizes insurance costs and tort liability risk.

As a result of these rulings, many traffic signs will need to be upgraded to meet both MUTCD and new reflectivity standards.

Signs Now would like to take this opportunity to educate our existing and future clients, both public and private entities, utilizing traffic control devices on the new standards and provide them with upgraded signs to replace non-compliant ones.

Simple guidelines to determine which signs need to meet the minimum reflectivity standards:

1. If it is a parking control sign (No Parking, Disabled Parking, etc.) Type 1 reflective is acceptable.
2. If the sign directs traffic (One way, Dead End, etc.) a Prismatic High Intensity Type III or higher reflective sign is recommended.
3. Street Name Signs on roadways with a speed limit of 35 mph or higher require a Prismatic High Intensity Type III or higher reflective.

In addition, traffic control devices must comply with the following standards:

- Size, shape, and color
- Sign placement and mounted height
- Design and legibility

The passing of this regulation also means that if someone is injured or worse, in an area where the traffic signs do not meet Federal Standards there will be a substantial exposure to tort liability. Everyone will eventually be required to meet these new standards, so the time to start upgrading signs is now. Signs made with 3M™ High Intensity Prismatic Sheeting are bright, durable and offer excellent life-cycle value, making them a great choice for FHWA Standard compliance on both public and private roads.