

# The Community Planner

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Planning, Financing, and Administration News

## Sign Retroreflectivity Compliance

As many of you know, in 2008 the Federal Highway Administration enacted a mandate which requires cities to meet minimum retroreflectivity levels for street signage. We have received a number of inquiries about what retroreflectivity is, the mandate and its deadlines and what should be done to meet the requirements.

### WHAT IS SIGN RETROREFLECTIVITY?

Sign Retroreflectivity refers to how the sign reflects light back to the source. Sign manufacturers use sheeting created with tiny glass beads or other reflectors to increase reflectivity. These materials increase the sign's visibility at night.

### RETROREFLECTIVITY COMPLIANCE DEADLINES (SOURCE: MNDOT)

**BY JANUARY 2012:** Agencies must establish and implement a sign assessment or management method to maintain minimum levels of sign retroreflectivity.

**BY JANUARY 2015:** Agencies must replace regulatory, warning, and ground-mounted guide signs (except street name) that are identified using the assessment or management methods as failing to meet the established minimum levels.

**BY JANUARY 2018:** Agencies must replace street name signs that are identified using the assessment or management methods as failing to meet the established minimum levels.

### MEETING THE JANUARY 2012 DEADLINE

A good first step at meeting the mandate to establish and implement a sign assessment/management program is to inventory the City's signs. During the inventory deficient signs can be identified. After identifying the signs that need to be replaced, a replacement program can be created.

### RECOMMENDATION OF HOW TO MEASURE SIGN RETROREFLECTIVITY

The most efficient and cost effective way at meeting the January 2012 deadline would be to perform a nighttime visual inspection of street signs. It would require two individuals to perform the inspection. One person would drive by the signs at or near the posted speed limit while the other individual grades the results of the signs as adequate, marginal or fail.



(If you don't have any of these signs, be thankful.)



We have included a blank sign inventory and inspection form with this issue of the Community Planner which may be useful. Also, we would recommend you review the Minnesota sign retroreflectivity tool kit at the following link:

[http://www.dot.state.mn.us/stateaid/trafficsafety/retro-reflectivity/SignRetroreflectivity\\_AMinnesotaToolkit.pdf](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/stateaid/trafficsafety/retro-reflectivity/SignRetroreflectivity_AMinnesotaToolkit.pdf)

### At Your Service

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or look us up at this event.

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