

Traffic Note 26

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Fluorescent Retro-reflective Traffic Sign Material - Information

Introduction

There is currently no standard available in regard to photometric properties and colour of fluorescent retro-reflective material. AS/NZS 1906.1¹ is silent on this material and NZS 5414², while giving some values for fluorescent materials, does not provide information for retro-reflective products. This note provides background information and describes the procedure the Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA) will take in approving fluorescent retro-reflective materials for use on traffic signs pending the availability of an agreed standard.

Need to Approve Fluorescent Orange Material

The *Code of Practice for Temporary Traffic Management* which came into force for Transit New Zealand contracts on 1 September 2000 requires orange fluorescent retro-reflective material on some temporary warning signs. The *NZ Gazette* notice, published 31 August 2000, approving traffic sign materials listed two orange fluorescent retro-reflective products previously only approved for use on belisha beacon discs.

Based on previous experience with these two products it was considered appropriate to approve them for use on temporary warning signs. It is important other manufacturers have clear criteria against which their product can be measured to gain approval. Criteria for approval had, therefore, to be established.

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Establishing an Interim Criteria

It is not appropriate for the LTSA to unilaterally establish its own standard. With the aid of a small working group (involving manufacturers and users) the LTSA has, however, set criteria for accepting product, particularly fluorescent orange, on an interim basis pending the establishment of a formal standard.

Details of the interim criteria, largely based on proposals currently before the Federal Highway Administration in the United States, have been provided to the sheeting and sign manufacturing industry. Approved product will continue to be notified in the *NZ Gazette*.

Fluorescent materials have limited life in comparison to other sign sheeting. Sheeting suppliers should provide sign manufacturers and users a statement of warranty in terms of expected life and/or levels of confidence regarding performance over life.

Conclusion

Before any fluorescent retro-reflective material can be approved for use on traffic signs it must be able to demonstrate compliance with the interim criteria.

The LTSA and the members of its working group will be monitoring the development of standards, particularly in the United States and Australia, with a view to adopting an appropriate standard as soon as practicable. Any material approved under the interim criteria but not meeting the replacement specifications will no longer be permitted on new signs.

¹ AS/NZS 1906.1:1993 *Retroreflective materials and devices for road traffic control purposes*
Part 1:Retroreflective materials

² NZS5414:1977 *Specification for the Construction of Traffic Signs*