

RETROREFLECTIVITY - FINAL RULE

The Federal Highway Administration has released in the Federal Register the Final Rule on compliance date changes in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), 2009 edition. The Final Rule was posted in the Federal Register May 14, 2012 with an effective date of June 13, 2012. The notice in the Federal Register states: "The Final Rule revises Table I-2 of the MUTCD eliminating the compliance dates for 46 items (8 that had already expired and 38 that had future compliance dates) and extends and/or revises the dates for 4 items. The target compliance dates for 8 items that are deemed to be of critical safety importance will remain in effect." It also: "exempts existing historic street name signs within a local historic district from Standards and Guidance of Section 2D.43 of the MUTCD regarding street sign color, letter size, and other design features."

What is most important to the Towns & Townships in this Final Rule is the elimination of the dates that signs will have to meet retro reflective standards. The date of January 22, 2015 to have all the regulatory, warning and post-mounted guide signs which were identified as substandard using an assessment or management method was eliminated. Also, the date of January 22, 2018 to replace the street name signs and overhead guide signs identified as sub-standard by an assessment or management method was eliminated. However, there is a requirement that agencies implement an assessment or management plan designed to maintain sign retroreflectivity at or above the established levels for regulatory and warning signs within 2 years from the effective date of the Final Rule. This means that agencies will have to have an assessment or management plan in place by June 13, 2014. It is encouraged that other types of signs in addition to regulatory and warning signs be added to the plan as resources allow.

Keep in mind that the elimination of the compliance dates does not relieve anyone from retroreflective standards listed in Table 2A-3 of the MUTCD. Any new sign installed, or any sign that is relocated, will have to meet the retroreflectivity standards. Also, even without a specific date, agencies will need to replace any sign they identify as not meeting the retroreflective levels as priorities and resources will allow.

Table I-2 of the MUTCD as amended by the Final Rule is as follows:

2009 MUTCD Section No.(s)	2009 MUTCD Section Title	Specific Provision	Compliance Date
2A.08	Maintaining Minimum Retroreflectivity.	Implementation and continued use of an assessment or management method that is designed to maintain regulatory and warning sign retroreflectivity at or above the established minimum levels (see Paragraph 2).	2 years from the effective date of this revision of the 2009 MUTCD*.
2A.19	Lateral Offset	Crashworthiness of sign supports on roads with posted speed limit of 50 mph or higher(see Paragraph 2).	January 17, 2013 (date established in the 2000 MUTCD).

2B.40	ONE WAY Signs (R6-1, R6-2).	New requirements in the 2009 MUTCD for the number and locations of ONE WAY signs (see Paragraphs 4, 9, and 10).	December 31, 2019.
2C.06 through 2C.14.	Horizontal Alignment Warning Signs.	Revised requirements in the 2009 MUTCD regarding the use of various horizontal alignment signs (see Table 2C-5).	December 31, 2019.
2E.3L2E.33, and 2E.36.	Plaques for Left-Hand Exits.	New requirement in the 2009 MUTCD to use El-5aP and El-5bP plaques for left-hand exits.	December 31, 2014.
4D.26	Yellow Change and Red Clearance Intervals.	New requirement in the 2009 MUTCD that durations of yellow change and red clearance intervals shall be determined using engineering practices (see Paragraphs 3 and 6).	5 years from the effective date of this revision of the 2009 MUTCD, or when timing adjustments are made to the individual intersection and/or corridor, whichever occurs first.
4E.06	Pedestrian Intervals and Signal Phases.	New requirement in the 2009 MUTCD that the pedestrian change interval shall not extend into the red clearance interval and shall be followed by a buffer interval of at least 3 seconds (see Paragraph 4).	5 years from the effective date of this revision of the 2009 MUTCD, or when timing adjustments are made to the individual intersection and/or corridor, whichever occurs first.
6D.03 **	Worker Safety Considerations.	New requirement in the 2009 MUTCD that all workers within the right-of-way shall wear high-visibility apparel (see Paragraphs 4, 6, and 7).	December 31, 2011.
6E.02 **	High-Visibility Safety Apparel.	New requirement in the 2009 MUTCD that all flaggers within the right-of-way shall wear high-visibility apparel.	December 31, 2011.
7D.04 **	Uniform of Adult Crossing Guards.	New requirement in the 2009 MUTCD for highvisibility apparel for adult crossing guards.	December 31, 2011.
8B.03, 8B.04	Grade Crossing (Crossbuck) Signs and Supports.	Retroreflective strip on Crossbuck sign and support (see Paragraph 7 in Section 8B.03 and Paragraphs 15 and 18 in Section 8B.04).	December 31, 2019.
8B.04	Crossbuck Assemblies with YIELD or STOP Signs at Passive Grade Crossings.	New requirement in the 2009 MUTCD for the use of STOP or YIELD signs with Crossbuck signs at passive grade crossings.	December 31, 2019.

* Types of signs other than regulatory or warning are to be added to an agency's management or assessment method as resources allow.

** MUTCD requirement is a result of a legislative mandate.

Note: All compliance dates that were previously published in Table 1-2 of the 2009 MUTCD and that do not appear in this revised table have been eliminated.

The entire Final Rule can be found at the MUTCD website at: <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/>

Look for: 2009 MUTCD Revision 2 - Compliance Dates (PDF 242KB, HTML)

Prepared by: Cliff Reuer, Technical Assistance Provider, SDLTAP