MDOT's TRAFFIC SIGNING PROGRAM:

WHY TRAFFIC SIGNS ARE REPLACED

> "While only one-quarter of all travel occurs at night, about half of all traffic fatalities occur after dark."

Many clues are available to drivers during the day to make driving a relatively easy task. At night, however, few clues remain, making the task more difficult. In addition, signs near the end of their service life that are visible during daylight hours may be hard to see at night.

National traffic sign retroreflectivity standards have been established to address this disparity. MDOT routinely replaces traffic signs on highway corridors as part of a 100 percent federally funded statewide sign replacement program.

It's all about SAFETY

Supports for traffic signs, frequently placed close to the roadway, can be become deadly hazards when struck by a vehicle if not designed, manufactured, and constructed to break away upon impact. Even relatively small sign supports can be deadly if not designed to break away. When replacing old traffic signs, MDOT also replaces sign posts to ensure safety. Coordinating the replacement of sign posts with traffic sign replacement also minimizes costs.

In addition to replacing old traffic signs, MDOT updates all signs along a corridor due to changing traffic patterns and the latest federal and state standards for location and message.

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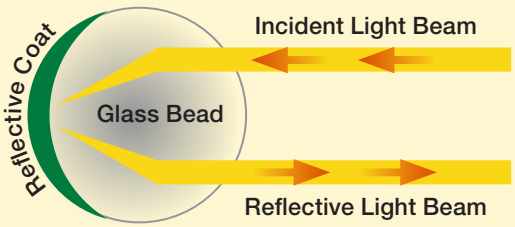

Retroreflectivity is a scientific term that describes the ability of an object to redirect light back to its source. Retroreflective traffic signs use small glass beads or microprismatic reflectors to return light from a vehicle's headlights back to the driver's eyes. The brighter the sign, the sooner a driver can see and read it. The retroreflective properties of traffic signs deteriorate over time, due to weather, exposure to the sun, damage, and other factors. Unless traffic signs are replaced on a timely basis, they become difficult to see and read at night.

Retroreflective signs are especially beneficial to older drivers. By 2030, one in five drivers will be age 65 or older. A 65-year-old needs eight times the amount of light a 25-year-old does. Bright, highly reflective traffic signs are more visible at night and can reduce nighttime crashes by helping older drivers – and motorists of all ages – to quickly read and react to commands and information on the signs.

Source: American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA)
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

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