



**Masser, Michelle**

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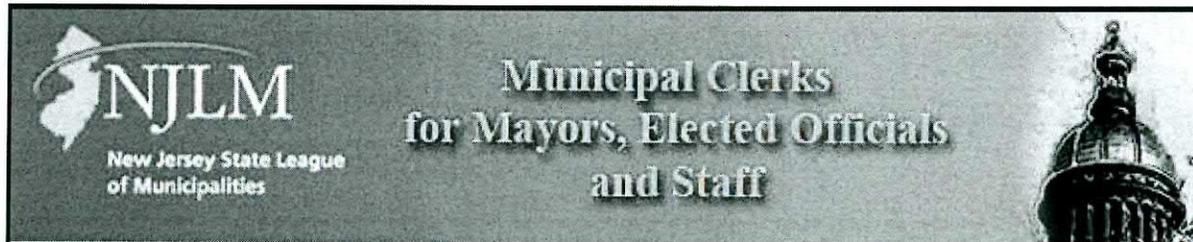
**From:** Lashway, Lisa  
**Sent:** Friday, January 13, 2012 1:54 PM  
**To:** Masser, Michelle; Canning, Sean; Perkins, Ray  
**Subject:** FW: Correction to Jan 12 Federal Road Sign Standards Update

Lisa Lashway  
Township Clerk  
Township of Mount Olive  
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973-691-0900 Ext. 7290

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**From:** NJLM to Municipal Officials [mailto:njlm-clerks@cityconnections.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 13, 2012 1:38 PM  
**To:** Lashway, Lisa  
**Subject:** Correction to Jan 12 Federal Road Sign Standards Update

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January 13, 2012

**CORRECTION TO 2<sup>nd</sup> date under III. RETROREFLECTIVITY OF SIGNS**

## **RE: Federal Road Sign Standards Update**

Dear Mayor:

Press reports may have created confusion regarding various Federal road sign standards, adopted and amended over the past ten years.

On August 31, 2011, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published, in the Federal Register, a PROPOSAL to eliminate, revise, or extend a variety of the existing compliance dates. The docket for comments on that proposal closed on October 31. Currently, FHWA is reviewing the 150 letters with comments to the docket.

At this time, we are unable to reliably estimate when a final rule might be issued. Until such time as a final rule is issued (published in the Federal Register), all existing compliance dates listed below are still in effect. Also, please be aware of the possibility that some or all of the PROPOSED changes to eliminate, revise or extend a variety of the compliance dates could potentially be changed in the final rule.

We hope this clarifies your responsibilities and options, regarding compliance with the standards. Those standards address three requirements.

### **I. UPPER AND LOWER CASE LETTERING ON STREET NAME AND OTHER GUIDE SIGNS**

In the future, street name signs will need to include a mix of upper and lower case letters, as appropriate. There is no deadline for compliance with this standard. There is no need to replace perfectly good signs.

**By January 22, 2012, however, you must have a “sign management plan” in place. That plan will detail your intentions to replace signs, as needed, due to normal wear and tear, or sooner.**

### **II. LETTER HEIGHTS ON STREET NAME SIGNS**

The US Department of Transportation recommends 6” initial letter heights

for street name signs on roads with speed limits of 40 MPH or less, with an option for 4" initial letter heights on roads with limits of 25 mph or less. For multi-lane roads with speed limits greater than 45 mph, the recommendations call for 8" initial letter heights on post mounted signs and 12" letter heights on over-head street name signs. There is no deadline for compliance with this standard. There is no need to replace perfectly good signs. The only requirement with a firm compliance date is this.

**By January 22, 2012, you will need to decide whether to use the recommended letter heights or use an engineering study or engineering judgment to decide that a smaller letter height is acceptable.**

### **III. RETROREFLECTIVITY OF SIGNS**

The majority of all traffic accidents resulting in fatalities occur at night. The American Automobile Association estimates that, by 2025, one in every four drivers will be 65 or older. A 65 year old needs, on average, four times the amount of light needed by a 25 year old to see. Because of this, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has adopted a new numerical standard of light reflection that can be measured using a retroreflectometer. Signs will be required to meet that standard and communities will be required to adopt a method to maintain retroreflectivity. Several methods can be used to meet the maintenance requirement, including:

- visual nighttime inspection from a moving vehicle by a trained inspector
- the use of a retroreflectometer;
- replacement of signs based on the expected duration meeting minimum standard retroreflectivity;
- replacement of all signs in an area, or of a type, based on shortest expected duration meeting minimum standard;
- replacement based on performance of sample signs; or
- other methods based on engineering studies.

**By January 22, 2012, you must adopt a plan to meet the new requirements by the dates cited below.**

**By January 22, 2015, regulatory and warning signs and post-mounted signs must meet the standard.**

**By January 22, 2018, over-head sign and street name signs must meet the standard.**

Though failure to meet the requirement might result in the withholding of some Federal transportation funding, the more significant result of non-compliance could be the tort liability, incurred as a result of an accident that could be attributed to non-compliant signage.

Please review these requirements with your municipal engineer. If, after that, you have any questions, contact Jon Moran at 609-695-3481, ext. 121.

Very truly yours,

William G. Dressel, Jr.  
Executive Director

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