



Designation: D 4956 – 01

Standard Specification for Retroreflective Sheeting for Traffic Control¹

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This standard has been approved for use by agencies of the Department of Defense.

1. Scope

1.1 This specification covers flexible, non-exposed glass bead lens and microprismatic, retroreflective sheeting designed for use on traffic control signs, delineators, barricades, and other devices.

1.2 The values stated in inch-pound units are to be regarded as the standard. The values given in parentheses are for information only.

1.3 The following safety hazards caveat pertains only to the test methods portion, Section 7, of this specification. *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:

- B 209 Specification for Aluminum and Aluminum-Alloy Sheet and Plate²
- B 209M Specification for Aluminum and Aluminum-Alloy Sheet and Plate [Metric]²
- B 449 Specification for Chromates on Aluminum³
- D 523 Test Method for Specular Gloss⁴
- E 284 Terminology of Appearance⁴
- E 308 Practice for Computing the Colors of Objects by Using the CIE System⁴
- E 808 Practice for Describing Retroreflection⁴
- E 810 Test Method for Coefficient of Retroreflection or Retroreflective Sheeting⁴
- E 991 Practice for Color Measurement of Fluorescent Specimens⁴
- E 1164 Practice for Obtaining Spectrophotometric Data for Object-Color Evaluation⁴
- E 1347 Test Method for Color and Color-Difference Mea-

- surement by Tristimulus (Filter) Colorimetry⁴
- E 1349 Test Method for Reflectance Factor and Color by Spectrophotometry Using Bidirectional Geometry⁴
- G 7 Practice for Atmospheric Environmental Exposure Testing of Nonmetallic Materials⁵
- G 23 Practice for Operating Light-Exposure Apparatus (Carbon-Arc Type) With and Without Water for Exposure of Nonmetallic Materials⁵
- G 147 Practice for Conditioning and Handling of Nonmetallic Materials for Natural and Artificial Weathering Tests⁵
- G 151 Practice for Exposing Nonmetallic Materials in Accelerated Test Devices that Use Laboratory Light Sources⁵
- G 152 Practice for Operating Open Flame Carbon Arc Light Apparatus for Exposure of Nonmetallic Materials⁵
- G 153 Practice for Operating Enclosed Carbon Arc Light Apparatus for Exposure of Nonmetallic Materials⁵
- 2.2 *Federal Specifications:*
 - FP-92 Standard Specifications for Construction of Roads and Bridges on Federal Highway Projects⁶
 - L-S-300C Federal Specification for Sheeting and Tape, Reflective: Non Exposed Lens⁷
- 2.3 *AASHTO Specification:*
 - M 268-00 I⁸

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—Definitions of terms are as described in Terminology E 284 and Practice E 808.

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *reboundable sheeting, n*—retroreflective material intended to be attached to flexible impact resistant plastic devices, such as traffic drum-like channelizing devices.

4. Classification

4.1 Retroreflective sheeting shall consist of a white or colored sheeting having a smooth outer surface and that essentially has the property of a retroreflector over its entire

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² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 02.02.

³ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 02.05.

⁴ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 06.01.

⁵ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 14.04.

⁶ Available from Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

⁷ Available from General Services Administration, 470 East L'Enfant Plaza S.W., Suite 8100, Washington, DC 20407.

⁸ Available from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, 444 N. Capitol St., N.W., Washington, DC 20001.

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surface. There are nine types and five classes of retroreflective sheeting. Types are determined by conformance to the retroreflectance, color, and durability requirements listed in 6.1 and may be of any construction providing that those requirements are met. Type designation is provided as a means for differentiating functional performance. Typical examples of applications are provided for descriptive information only and are not intended to be limitations or recommendations. Common identifiers for each type are listed in 4.2.

4.1.1 The typical applications for the retroreflective sheeting addressed in this specification are:

Type	Typical Application
I	Highway Signing, construction-zone devices, and delineators
II	Highway Signing, construction-zone devices, and delineators
III	Highway Signing, construction-zone devices, and delineators
IV	Highway Signing, construction-zone devices, and delineators
V	Delineators
VI	Temporary roll-up signs, warning signs, traffic cone collars, and post bands
VII	Highway Signing, construction-zone devices, and delineators
VIII	Highway Signing, construction-zone devices, and delineators
IX	Highway Signing, construction-zone devices, and delineators

4.2 Retroreflective sheeting shall be classified as follows:

4.2.1 *Type I*—A medium-intensity retroreflective sheeting referred to as “engineering grade” and typically enclosed lens glass-bead sheeting. Typical applications for this material are permanent highway signing, construction zone devices, and delineators.

4.2.2 *Type II*—A medium-high-intensity retroreflective sheeting sometimes referred to as “super engineer grade” and typically enclosed lens glass-bead sheeting. Typical applications for this material are permanent highway signing, construction zone devices, and delineators.

4.2.3 *Type III*—A high-intensity retroreflective sheeting, that is typically encapsulated glass-bead retroreflective material. Typical applications for this material are permanent highway signing, construction zone devices, and delineators.

4.2.4 *Type IV*—A high-intensity retroreflective sheeting. This sheeting is typically an unmetallized microprismatic retroreflective element material. Typical applications for this material are permanent highway signing, construction zone devices, and delineators.

4.2.5 *Type V*—A super-high-intensity retroreflective sheeting. This sheeting is typically a metallized microprismatic retroreflective element material. This sheeting is typically used for delineators.

4.2.6 *Type VI*—An elastomeric high-intensity retroreflective sheeting without adhesive. This sheeting is typically a vinyl microprismatic retroreflective material. This sheeting is typically used for orange temporary roll-up warning signs, traffic cone collars, and post bands.

4.2.7 *Type VII*—A super-high-intensity retroreflective sheeting having highest retroreflectivity characteristics at long and medium road distances as determined by the R_A values of Table 1 at 0.1° and 0.2° observation angle. This sheeting is typically an unmetallized microprismatic retroreflective element material. Typical applications for this material are permanent highway signing, construction zone devices, and delineators.

4.2.8 *Type VIII*—A super-high-intensity retroreflective

TABLE 1 Type VII Sheeting^A

Observation Angle	Entrance Angle	White	Yellow	Orange	Green	Red	Blue
0.1° ^B	−4°	1000	750	375	100	200	45
0.1° ^B	+30°	570	430	215	57	115	26
0.2°	−4°	750	560	280	75	150	34
0.2°	+30°	430	320	160	43	86	20
0.5°	−4°	240	180	90	24	48	11
0.5°	+30°	135	100	50	14	27	6.0

^A Minimum Coefficient of Retroreflection (R_A) $\text{cd} \cdot \text{lx}^{-1} \cdot \text{m}^{-2}$.

^B Values for 0.1° observation angles are supplementary requirements that shall apply only when specified by the purchaser in the contract or order.

sheeting having highest retroreflectivity characteristics at long and medium road distances as determined by the R_A values of Table 2 at 0.1° and 0.2° observation angle. This sheeting is typically an unmetallized microprismatic retroreflective element material. Typical applications for this material are permanent highway signing, construction zone devices, and delineators.

4.2.9 *Type IX*—A very-high-intensity retroreflective sheeting having highest retroreflectivity characteristics at short road distances as determined by the R_A values of Table 3 at 1° observation angle. This sheeting is typically an unmetallized microprismatic retroreflective element material. Typical applications for this material are permanent highway signing, construction zone devices, and delineators.

NOTE 1—All retroreflective sheetings, but especially microprismatic sheetings, may have unique performance characteristics outside of the range of the standard geometries presented in the tables that define the types. Certain applications may require the use of a particular product within a particular type in order to achieve a desired level of retroreflectivity in a given situation. In these cases, information concerning additional performance characteristics must be obtained.

4.3 *Backing Classes*—The backing required for retroreflective sheeting Types I through IX shall be classified as follows:

4.3.1 *Class 1*—The adhesive backing shall be pressure-sensitive, require no heat, solvent, or other preparation for adhesion to smooth, clean surfaces.

4.3.2 *Class 2*—The adhesive backing shall have an adhesive that shall be activated by applying heat and pressure to the material. The temperature necessary to form a durable permanent bond shall be a minimum of 150°F (66°C).

4.3.2.1 The Class 2 material shall be repositionable under normal shop conditions and at substrate temperatures up to 100°F (38°C) and without damage to the material. The Class 2 material may be perforated to facilitate removal of air in heat-vacuum laminators, but the perforations must be of a size and frequency such that they do not cause objectionable blemishes when the sheeting is printed.

TABLE 2 Type VIII Sheeting^A

Observation Angle	Entrance Angle	White	Yellow	Orange	Green	Red	Blue	Brown
0.1° ^B	−4°	1000	750	375	100	150	60	30
0.1° ^B	+30°	460	345	175	46	69	28	14
0.2°	−4°	700	525	265	70	105	42	21
0.2°	+30°	325	245	120	33	49	20	10
0.5°	−4°	250	190	94	25	38	15	7.5
0.5°	+30°	115	86	43	12	17	7	3.5

^A Minimum Coefficient of Retroreflection (R_A) $\text{cd} \cdot \text{lx}^{-1} \cdot \text{m}^{-2}$.

^B Values for 0.1° observation angle are supplementary requirements that shall apply only when specified by the purchaser in the contract or order.



TABLE 3 Type IX Sheeting^A

Observation Angle	Entrance Angle	White	Yellow	Orange	Green	Red	Blue
0.1° ^B	−4°	660	500	250	66	130	30
0.1° ^B	+30°	370	280	140	37	74	17
0.2°	−4°	380	285	145	38	76	17
0.2°	+30°	215	162	82	22	43	10
0.5°	−4°	240	180	90	24	48	11
0.5°	+30°	135	100	50	14	27	6.0
1.0°	−4°	80	60	30	8.0	16	3.6
1.0°	+30°	45	34	17	4.5	9.0	2.0

^A Minimum Coefficient of Retroreflection (R_A) $\text{cd} \cdot \text{lx}^{-1} \cdot \text{m}^{-2}$.

^B Values for 0.1° observation angles are supplementary requirements that shall apply only when specified by the purchaser in the contract or order.

4.3.3 *Class 3*—The adhesive backing shall have a positionable low-tack pressure-sensitive adhesive that requires no heat, solvent, or other preparation for adhesion to smooth, clean surfaces. It shall be repositionable up to a temperature of 100°F (38°C) without damage to the material.

4.3.4 *Class 4*—The adhesive backing shall have a low-temperature pressure-sensitive adhesive that permits sheeting applications at temperatures down to +20°F (−7°C) without the aid of heat, solvent, or other preparation for adhesion to smooth, dry, clean surfaces.

4.3.5 *Class 5*—This shall be a nonadhesive backing made of material commercially used for self-supporting products such as traffic cone collars, temporary roll-up warning signs, and post bands.

5. Ordering Information

5.1 The purchaser using this specification shall include the following information:

5.1.1 ASTM designation (D 4956),

5.1.2 Classification type (see Section 4),

5.1.3 Adhesive class (see 4.3),

5.1.4 Daytime color (see 6.3),

5.1.5 Length and width of sheets (see 8.1),

5.1.6 Length and width of rolls (see 8.2), and

5.1.7 Supplementary information, if required by the purchaser.

5.1.7.1 Compliance with the minimum coefficient of retroreflection for 0.1° observation angle is a supplementary requirement which shall apply only when specified. An observation angle of 0.1° may be specified where the long distance performance of a sheeting is to be a requirement,

5.1.7.2 Fungus-resistance testing requirements (see Supplementary Requirement S1),

5.1.7.3 Reboundable sheeting requirements (see Supplementary Requirement S2),

5.1.8 Indication that the sheeting is intended for work zone use, if applicable, to determine which weathering requirements apply, and

5.1.9 Any additional information.

6. Performance Requirements

6.1 This is a summary of the minimum performance requirements for each type of retroreflective sheeting.

6.1.1 *Type I*—Minimum Coefficient of Retroreflection—Table 4; Outdoor Weathering—24 months, see 6.4; Daytime Luminance Factor—Table 5; Other requirements: When the

TABLE 4 Type I Sheeting^A

Observation Angle	Entrance Angle	White	Yellow	Orange	Green	Red	Blue	Brown
0.2°	−4°	70	50	25	9.0	14	4.0	1.0
0.2°	+30°	30	22	7.0	3.5	6.0	1.7	0.3
0.5°	−4°	30	25	13	4.5	7.5	2.0	0.3
0.5°	+30°	15	13	4.0	2.2	3.0	0.8	0.2

^A Minimum Coefficient of Retroreflection (R_A) $\text{cd}/\text{ft}^2(\text{cd} \cdot \text{lx}^{-1} \cdot \text{m}^{-2})$.

TABLE 5 Daytime Luminance Factor (Y %)^A

Color	Minimum	Maximum
White	27	...
Yellow	15	45
Orange	14	30
Green	3.0	9.0
Red	2.5	12
Blue	1.0	10
Brown	4.0	9.0

^A For Sheeting Types I, II, III and VI.

colors orange, yellow, or white are specified for construction work zone applications, the outdoor weathering will be 12 months.

6.1.2 *Type II*—Minimum Coefficient of Retroreflection—Table 6; Outdoor Weathering—36 months, see 6.4; Daytime Luminance Factor—Table 5; Other requirements: When the colors orange, yellow, or white are specified for construction work zone application, the outdoor weathering will be 12 months.

6.1.3 *Type III*—Minimum Coefficient of Retroreflection—Table 7; Outdoor Weathering—36 months, see 6.4; Daytime Luminance Factor—Table 5; Other Requirements: When the colors orange, yellow, or white are specified for construction work zone applications, the outdoor weathering will be 12 months.

6.1.4 *Type IV*—Minimum Coefficient of Retroreflection—Table 8; Outdoor Weathering—36 months, see 6.4; Daytime Luminance Factor—Table 9; Other Requirements: When the colors orange, yellow, or white are specified for construction work zone applications, the outdoor weathering will be 12 months.

6.1.5 *Type V*—Minimum Coefficient of Retroreflection—Table 10; Outdoor Weathering—36 months, see 6.4; Daytime Luminance Factor—Table 11; Other requirements: When the colors orange, yellow, or white are specified for construction work zone applications, the outdoor weathering will be 12 months.

6.1.6 *Type VI*—Minimum Coefficient of Retroreflection—Table 12; Outdoor Weathering—6 months, see 6.4; Daytime Luminance Factor—Table 5.

6.1.7 *Type VII*—Minimum Coefficient of Retroreflection—Table 1; Outdoor Weathering—36 months, see 6.4; Daytime

TABLE 6 Type II Sheeting^A

Observation Angle	Entrance Angle	White	Yellow	Orange	Green	Red	Blue	Brown
0.2°	−4°	140	100	60	30	30	10	5.0
0.2°	+30°	60	36	22	10	12	4.0	2.0
0.5°	−4°	50	33	20	9.0	10	3.0	2.0
0.5°	+30°	28	20	12	6.0	6.0	2.0	1.0

^A Minimum Coefficient of Retroreflection (R_A) $\text{cd}/\text{ft}^2(\text{cd} \cdot \text{lx}^{-1} \cdot \text{m}^{-2})$.