

Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. I use another system for asset management. Can I export data from 3M's Sign Management System into my present system?**

A. Our system is designed to export inventory data to industry standard ERSI Geodatabase format. You can then import the data into your system. This can be done by your IT department or this task can be included in your agreement with 3M and we can take care of it for you.

**Q. I want to record additional sign attributes. Can you do this?**

A. Yes. The basic list of attributes we provide will enable you to manage signs with a modest upfront investment. Additional attributes can be easily added, if needed. Attributes which cannot be collected using mobile techniques will have the most impact on the overall cost of an inventory.

**Q. Do you have tools to allow us to collect additional sign attributes, and make additions or corrections to the sign inventory as sign maintenance activity occurs?**

A. Yes. The Field Asset Status Tracker (FAST) allows authorized users the option to add, delete or make changes to the current inventory of signs as well as edit existing sign attributes as sign changes and maintenance occur in the field. It also allows the user to add or replace digital pictures in the data set.

**Q. Can I purchase additional FAST tools or load the software on my computers?**

A. Yes. You can purchase as many units as needed. We sell the FAST Tool as either software only or as a hardware/software bundle with a netbook computer utilizing a touchscreen interface. The preloaded touchscreen netbook allows "one touch" data entry. Software-only licenses can be loaded on your laptop computers.

**Q. Will 3M's system comply with the FHWA requirements for a method to manage a minimum sign retroreflectivity program?**

A. Yes. The 3M system complies with FHWA requirements for a system to monitor sign performance. Replacement or maintenance of signs identified during assessment is required to fully comply with MUTCD requirements.



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**Q. How much will it cost to inventory and assess signs for my roads.**

A. The cost to complete a sign inventory for a particular area depends on several factors. We have developed a tool to allow your 3M representative to estimate costs. You will need to know the centerline miles of road you maintain and the types of roads. Using this information, your 3M representative can provide a cost estimate that will be useful for budgeting purposes.

**Q. Does the FAST tool require an internet connection in the field i.e. wireless internet?**

A. No, the base map and existing data is downloaded to the FAST tool prior to going into the field.

**Q. What if an agency adds a new street? How are signs added to the inventory?**

A. Changes to the base map (such as addition of a new street or a change in a jurisdiction boundary) would be made by 3M using data provided by the agency, at an additional cost. Changes to the inventory including additions, deletions and corrections are entered using the field tool (FAST).

**Q. How does 3M evaluate the reflective performance of signs for compliance with FHWA minimums?**

A. 3M uses a trained observer and comparative panel method to identify signs which are deficient for reflectivity or legibility. A work plan is then prepared to either measure reflectivity or replace the sign. Once the sign is replaced, a record of the installation date, sheeting type, etc. is recorded in the database. The agency may now use this information for future replacement decisions.

**Q. How does 3M charge for hosting of the data?**

A. 3M charges an annual fee to host the data on the web site. The cost depends on the amount of data being stored. Generally the fee will range from \$1,500 for a smaller data set to \$5,000 for a larger data set.



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**Q. What if the agency wants the data stored on their servers?**

A. 3M would export the data in a format agreed upon in the contract and the cost would then be included in the initial contract amount. If the agency chooses to host the data on their servers, the FAST tool will not be available.

**Q. Will assessment provide a date for individual sign replacement?**

A. The assessment results in a rating of each sign in one of four categories 1) Critical = needs immediate replacement, 2) Poor = replace in next 12 months, 3) Fair = functional with evidence of deterioration, anticipate to likely replace in next 2-5 years, 4) Good = No evidence of reduced performance from new, 5+ years of remaining service life. Once a sign is replaced the sheeting type and installation date is recorded in the central database and a date is assigned for expected replacement.

**Q. Will the assessment recognize signs that are out of MUTCD compliance? (too small, wrong message, etc.)**

A. Compliance requires a traffic engineering assessment, which is not included in the standard inventory and assessment costs. 3M would retain a qualified consultant to perform this, if requested, at additional cost.

