

Durham makes its choice

Durham County Council has used the provisions within BS8408 to specify High Intensity Prismatic Reflective Sheeting (HIP) in every situation where Class Ref 2 performance is desired

Life is full of choices, but it often pays to go with what you know works and what you can trust. That certainly seems to be the prevailing attitude within Durham County Council's Traffic Section, and it's a policy that's paying dividends.

"We try to set the best standard for safety and performance for the people of County Durham," says Team Leader, Don Waller. "From a signing perspective, that means we insist on 3M's HIP sheeting for every Class Ref 2 application."



Exceeding the standard

In practice, Don happily admits that HIP often exceeds the reflective performance criteria required by BS EN 12899-1:2001 and makes no apology for going for a better performing material. "We've now issued a formal letter of instruction to our Direct Service Organisation to use HIP on all new signs, unless we need the even higher performance from DG³," he notes.

The decision to specify HIP for all situations when beaded High Intensity used to be used was what the Americans might term a 'no-brainer'. "We're fortunate to have excellent support from trusted local suppliers and 3M," says Don. "The fact that HIP is clearly a much better all round product than beaded materials, but comes at equivalent cost, made it easy to insist on its use."

With HIP drivers have longer to see the sign and instructions are clearer. But it's also better in other respects. Signmakers agree that it is easier to work with. Its straight-line patterning makes it easier to align text. The material is less prone to edge cracking during handling and installation and comes with a 12 year warranty rather than 10 years given to beaded materials.

Local benefits

As well as helping the local community with superior signs, Don Waller also points out that the decision to specify HIP helps the local economy. "We employ a locally based DSO, working with William Smith in Barnard Castle," he says. "We've got a great relationship with these suppliers and with 3M, and this has often brought other rewards that have helped us to provide the best service to local people."

HIP is fit for purpose

HIP has been used extensively over the last 3 years in many road situations and has been proven over and over again to be fit for purpose as an equal alternate at the Class Ref 2 performance level.

Local Authorities specify HIP by a variety of descriptions

- Class Ref 2 (proven fit for purpose)
- Class Ref 2 prismatic
- Local specification or instruction (as per the case study above)
- BS 8408 Driving Scenarios

If you would like more information on specifying HIP using BS 8408, use the fax back form provided to request a list of common scenarios found within the standard.