

# Traffic Note 45

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## Temporary masking of traffic signs – Information

Land Transport New Zealand (Land Transport NZ) has become aware some contractors have been partially covering traffic signs (generally the text) by means of a spray-on covering which is removed when no longer required. Land Transport NZ has concerns about this product.

Tests have found the product not always easy to remove completely and methods used to remove the material are likely to damage the sign's retro-reflective material. In these circumstances it is likely the manufacturer's warranty becomes void and the road controlling authority will face costs of early replacement. The possible impact on the effectiveness of the sign could also be significant. With some removal treatments it is likely the retro-reflective properties will be affected. While the sign may appear satisfactory during the day it may well have minimal retro-reflective properties at night.

A further concern to Land Transport NZ is the variable quality of the covering that is likely to be achieved. The treatment may look like graffiti or tagging or the retro-reflective material may not be completely masked causing problems at night. In these circumstances a driver may revert to the behaviour permitted by the unmasked sign, for example, travelling at the underlying speed restriction. This could clearly be unsafe for the driver or any workers in the affected area.

Road controlling authorities should ensure any temporarily masking is effective. This means:

- any masking is clearly official
- the sign cannot be read or, if only partial covering of the sign is required the remaining message is not open to misinterpretation
- the covering material is fixed securely and preferably without using any form of adhesion or other means likely to damage the retro-reflective sheeting on the sign
- when removed, there is no detrimental effect on the performance of the sign.