

Choosing the RIGHT measuring equipment.

Retroreflectometers are an essential tool in the arsenal for Roadmarkers. Small in physical size but huge in terms of how they can help you. At the present time there are many different Retroreflectometers available on the market. Some of them are basic models working as comparators, while others come with all the bells and whistles. Some units comply fully with all standards and are traceable; while others may not comply to those standards and are not traceable. How do you choose the right Retroreflectometer for your requirements? Well, let's have a quick look at the 5 questions you should ask yourself to make sure you do just this.

Step 1: Do You really need it? Isn't it just another expense?

Most people view measuring equipment as an expense or cost and this can be their undoing. By having a shift in thinking however, measuring equipment can actually be seen as an investment and money-making tool! How? Firstly, it can allow you to know exactly when repaints are due so you can get more work out of councils by telling them it needs to be done and why. Secondly, you can measure how fast retroreflectivity lessens over time and therefore when you tender for jobs, give a lower price (increasing the chance of a successful tender), as you don't add unnecessary repaints into the price.

Step 2: How easy is the Retroreflectometer to use?

Some of the instruments are as easy to use as: 1. Take out of box. 2. Switch on. 3. Do an Auto calibration 4. Start measuring. It can be as simple as that for some instruments. Others need the time to study comprehensive manuals and test procedures. For those who want to know every specific detail and operational function but even if you pay no attention to that, you won't really be at too much of a disadvantage. Some instruments have in-built accumulator (re-chargeable battery, for those of you non-technical readers), that can be used non-stop for up to 20 hours or around 8000 measurements before needing to be recharged. Other equipment needs to be recharged a few times a day, which can create inconveniences, delays and additional costs.

Step 3: What do these instruments actually do?

Some of the Instruments can measure day-time visibility and retroreflectivity by night and can store single values or averages and print them out in the field or download to the computer. They can measure in wet and dry conditions and with GPS options you can refer measuring points to a map. Some can measure and store humidity and temperature. Other instruments are very basic and can only measure retroreflectivity and averages or data has to be calculated manually and written into time-consuming forms. Some of the retroreflectometers are very reliable and come with a two-year warranty.

Step 4: What surfaces can this equipment measure on?

Most road surfaces are painted with flat-line, yet this is changing with the progressive nature of roadmarking and introduction of profile and structured lines. It will be wise to choose an instrument, which is capable of measuring future markings. Make sure the instrument can measure on all these surfaces, is lightweight. By just purchasing a cheap piece of measuring equipment you run the risk of not being able to measure on more complex surfaces in the years to come so 'future proof' your company by making the right decision today.

Step 5: Does it comply to the standards established by governing bodies?

Imagine spending money on equipment that doesn't even meet with regulatory standards! What a waste of time and money! Make sure that you are not pouring money down a black hole but rather investing in a revenue generating tool.

Deciding which measuring equipment is best for your company is an important decision to make and has a lot riding on it. If you would like any further advice or help in this matter please contact Kadcam Enterprises now, so you make the right choice.