



**EMBARGOED UNTIL**  
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**CONTACT: Monica Worth**  
540/687-8652 office  
540/675-2250 home  
703/407-2997 cellular

## **CITIES FACE DETOUR ON NEW EMERGENCY SIGNAGE**

*Fredericksburg, Va.* – At least nine U.S. cities – *Los Angeles, Miami, Detroit, Chicago, Phoenix, Las Vegas, Kansas City, Dallas and Philadelphia* – face serious challenges to implementation of the federal government’s new standards for emergency management signage. Citing a variety of obstacles, from tight budgets to lack of awareness on the part of emergency planners, transportation officials in those cities say they do not have the necessary impetus to install or upgrade emergency evacuation route signage and related public safety postings.

In a telephone survey conducted by The American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA), traffic engineering supervisors in nine cities were asked if emergency signs that comply with recently published Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) standards had been installed or were scheduled for installation in that jurisdiction, and if it was part of the area’s regional emergency management plan to upgrade signage in compliance with new plans and standards. Among cities with existing emergency signage, none planned upgrades. Few of the cities currently engaged in emergency planning had discussed new signage as a component of new plans.

This week in Baltimore, Maryland, FHWA’s Operations Security Task Force launched a 10-city series of workshops with state and municipal officials to address emergency response and recovery for transportation systems. The workshops include a focus on citizen involvement in emergency preparation.

“Your community may have a great evacuation plan, but if it isn’t mapped out on signs, the public is driving blind,” said Roger Wentz, ATSSA Executive Director. “People need to become familiar with the new signs, and they deserve a chance to pre-plan their own response to region-wide disasters.”

Tips for household evacuation planning, as well as graphics and specifications for the new emergency signage are available by logging onto [www.atssa.com](http://www.atssa.com), and clicking on “Important Announcements.” Signs include guidance to Decontamination Centers, Chemical Shelters, weather-related disaster routes, and other public health and safety infrastructure.

“It’s important to understand that this issue involves both public education and public funding,” Wentz cautions. “Transportation officials face a mountain of competing priorities. But proposals now before Congress can ensure that state and local governments get the funding they need to guide the public to safety during emergencies.”

ATSSA is a roadway safety organization representing the manufacturers and installers of roadway safety features such as signs, pavement markings, guardrails, and temporary traffic control devices. For more information on ATSSA or related legislative proposals, go to [www.atssa.com](http://www.atssa.com).