

# More from the International Sign Association

## Signs help drivers navigate unknown territory

You're on your way to that new Italian restaurant that everyone is raving about. You know it's somewhere along Main Street, but you aren't sure of the exact address. What do you do? Look for the sign, of course.

It's a well-known fact that on-premise signs help drivers in unknown territories navigate the roadways with clear cues as to what lies ahead. But on-premise signage not only keeps you from having to pull over at the nearest gas station to ask for directions, these commercial guideposts can also keep you from getting rear ended by the harried driver behind you when you make that sudden turn into the restaurant's parking lot.

Common sense alone tells us that a roadway sign that is large and conspicuous enough for a driver to read could not possibly be dangerous. But this myth has plagued the sign industry for decades. New studies are now proving that readable signs help prevent that dangerous last minute dash across lanes of traffic to turn into a parking lot, or the increased frustration of having to make a U-turn or go around the block and come back to the desired business location.

Thomas Claus, director of government relations for the International Sign Association (ISA), says business signs are in many ways part of the community's primary wayfinding systems, serving as landmarks and key visual clues to help people navigate through a city. He says by forcing business signs to be small and inconspicuous too many cities are inadvertently endangering the public, rather than enhancing the public's safety.

ISA research shows that when the traffic along a commercial street moves quickly, or occupies multiple lanes, or when the street is zoned for impulse selling, business signs must be allowed to be taller and larger in order to allow drivers to read and respond to them safely. If the sign cannot be read in time, drivers could be forced to make unsafe maneuvers through traffic.

## Give McGruff a light

While McGruff the Crime Dog® is biting crime, he has an ally: on-premise signs that light commercial areas at night. Dark space is dangerous in a city. But when a street is well lit and has an active appearance at night, ISA research indicates that criminal activity is reduced and people feel safer. On-premise signs that are illuminated for nighttime visibility enhance and subsidize the publicly-funded street lighting system.

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