Evaluation of Portable Retroreflectometers
Kentucky Transportation Center
Research Report
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EVALUATION OF PORTABLE RETROREFLECTOMETERS

National Transportation Product Evaluation Program

prepared by

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University of Kentucky

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables ....................................................................................................... ii
List of Figures ..................................................................................................... iii

1.0 Introduction .............................................................................................. 1
2.0 Procedure................................................................................................... 1
3.0 Description of Retroreflectometers............................................................. 2
4.0 Results....................................................................................................... 3
5.0 Tables....................................................................................................... 4
6.0 Figures....................................................................................................... 7
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Comparison of Retroflectometer Data (June 1995)
Table 2. Comparison of Retroflectometer Data (October 1995)
Table 3. Comparison of Retroflectometer Data (May 1996)
**LIST OF FIGURES**

| Figure 1. | Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track). |
| Figure 2. | Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Center). |
| Figure 3. | Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track). |
| Figure 4. | Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Center). |
| Figure 5. | Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track). |
| Figure 6. | Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center). |
| Figure 7. | Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track). |
| Figure 8. | Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Center). |
| Figure 9. | Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track). |
| Figure 10. | Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Center). |
| Figure 11. | Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track). |
| Figure 12. | Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track). |
| Figure 13. | Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Center). |
| Figure 14. | Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track). |
| Figure 15. | Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Center). |
| Figure 16. | Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track). |
| Figure 17. | Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995 (Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track). |
| Figure 18. | Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995 (Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Center). |
Figure 19. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995 (Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track).
Figure 20. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995 (Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Center).
Figure 21. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995 (Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track).
Figure 22. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995 (Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center).
Figure 23. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track).
Figure 24. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Center).
Figure 25. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track).
Figure 26. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Center).
Figure 27. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track).
Figure 28. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center).
Figure 29. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track).
Figure 30. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Center).
Figure 31. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track).
Figure 32. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Center).
Figure 33. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track).
Figure 34. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995 (Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track).
Figure 35. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, October 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track).
Figure 36. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, October 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Center).
Figure 37. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, October 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track).
Figure 38. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, October 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center).
Figure 39. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track).
Figure 40. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Center).
Figure 41. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track).
Figure 42. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Center).
Figure 43. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track).
Figure 44. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center).
Figure 45. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track).
Figure 46. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Center).
Figure 47. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track).
Figure 48. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995 (Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center).
Figure 49. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, October 1995 (Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track).
Figure 50. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, October 1995 (Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Center).
Figure 51. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, October 1995 (Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track).
Figure 52. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, October 1995 (Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center).
Figure 53. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995 (Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track).
Figure 54. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995 (Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Center).
Figure 55. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995 (Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track).
Figure 56. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995 (Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Center).
Figure 57. Mirolux vs. Mirolux-B Measurements, May 1996 (Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track).
Figure 58. Mirolux vs. Mirolux-B Measurements, May 1996 (Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Center).
Figure 59. Mirolux vs. Mirolux-B Measurements, May 1996 (Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track).
Figure 60. Mirolux vs. Mirolux-B Measurements, May 1996 (Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Center).
Figure 61. Mirolux vs. Mirolux-B Measurements, May 1996 (Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track).
Figure 62. Mirolux vs. Mirolux-B Measurements, May 1996 (Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center).
Figure 63. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, May 1996 (Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track).
Figure 64. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, May 1996 (Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track).
Figure 65. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, May 1996 (Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track).
Figure 66. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, May 1996 (Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center).
Figure 67. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996 (Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track).
Figure 68. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996 (Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Center).
Figure 69. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996 (Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track).
Figure 70. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996 (Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track).
Figure 71. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996 (Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center).
Figure 72. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996 (Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track).
Figure 73. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996 (Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track).
Figure 74. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996 (Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track).
Figure 75. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996 (Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center).
Figure 76. Mirolux vs. Mirolux-B Measurements, May 1996 (Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track).
Figure 77. Mirolux vs. Mirolux-B Measurements, May 1996 (Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Center).
Figure 78. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, May 1996 (Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track).
Figure 79. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, May 1996 (Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track).
Figure 80. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, May 1996 (Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track).
Figure 81. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, May 1996 (Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center).
Figure 82. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996 (Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track).
Figure 83. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996 (Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Center).
Figure 84. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996 (Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track).
Figure 85. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996 (Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Center).
Figure 86. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996 (Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track).
Figure 87. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996 (Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center).
Figure 88. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996 (Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track).
Figure 89. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996 (Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track).
Figure 90. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996 (Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track).
Figure 91. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996 (Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center).
1.0 INTRODUCTION

Portable retroreflectometers have been used to compare the reflectivity of the various pavement marking materials. The Mirolux 12 has been used to collect reflectivity data for the products tested for the National Transportation Product Evaluation Program (NTPEP). The Mirolux 12 does not have a 30 meter geometry, and there has been a desire to explore the possibility of using a retroreflectometer which has a 30 meter geometry which may better simulate the view of a driver. The objective of this report is to compare data taken with the Mirolux 12 and two other portable retroreflectometers having the 30 meter geometry.

2.0 PROCEDURE

As part of the standard data collection used at the NTPEP test decks, reflectivity data are taken monthly for a period of one year after application of the test lines. Data are taken for a second year for long-life materials.

A total of 173 materials were placed in Kentucky in 1995. When divided into specific categories, 110 materials would be classified as a paint (including 10 durable type paints), 35 as a thermoplastic, 8 as a preformed thermoplastic, 13 as a nonremovable tape, and 7 as a removable tape. A listing of the materials placed in Kentucky in 1995 is given in “Volume I. Field Evaluations; Summary of Results of 1995 Field and Laboratory Evaluations of Pavement Marking Materials.”

The material is placed on both an asphalt and Portland cement concrete test deck. The test sites in Kentucky were in the eastbound lanes of Interstate 64 near Frankfort. At the test sites, Interstate 64 is a rural, four lane highway with a speed limit of 65 mph. Both sites had a daily traffic count of about 20,000. The materials were placed in June 1995.

Four transverse lines are placed in the right lane for each material except the removable tapes. Reflectivity measurements are taken in the left wheel track and center of the right lane. For the removable tapes, six transverse and six longitudinal lines were placed, with one line removed each month such that all the lines were removed by December 1995.

In addition to the monthly data collected by the Mirolux 12, data were collected using two additional portable retroreflectometers for three of the months. Data were collected using the three instruments in June 1995. This was the first measurement taken of the reflectivity for the materials. All three instruments were also used in October 1995 and May 1996. Data were also taken with a second Mirolux 12 in May 1996.
The LTL2000 and the Retro-Lux Model 1500 retroreflectometers were used as a comparison to the Mirolux 12. All three were portable types of instruments. Data were collected on each line using the Mirolux 12. As much data as possible were collected using the other two instruments. Battery life prevented data collection for all the test lines using the other instruments. Comparisons were only made using test lines where data were collected using all three instruments. Linear regression was used to determine the relationships.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF RETROREFLECTOMETERS

All three of the devices used were portable with digital readouts. The retroreflectometers used in the tests were the Mirolux 12, LTL2000, and Retro-Lux 1500. The units of measurements were milli-candela per square foot per foot-candle (or milli-candela per square meter per lux). All devices used rechargeable batteries as the power supply.

The Mirolux 12 has been used as the standard device to collect reflectivity data. It is manufactured in the United States. This instrument is 18 inches long, 6 inches wide, 9 inches high and weighs 14 pounds. It has both internal and external calibration plates. The light source is a 12 volt, 12 watt halogen lamp. The power supply is a 12 volt DC battery. Its measuring geometry consists of an 86.5 degree illumination angle and a 1.5 degree observation angle. The illuminated area dimension is 3.5 by 6.5 inches.

The LTL2000 is manufactured in Denmark. It is designed to measure data at a simulated distance of 30 meters. The information concerning this device notes it can be used on both dry and wet surfaces. All data were taken on dry surfaces. The maximum length is 28.3 inches, with a maximum width of 7.5 inches and a maximum height of 20.9 inches, and weighs 26.5 pounds. Its power supply is a 12 volt, 3 ampere battery. Its measuring geometry consists of a 1.24 degree illumination angle to the road and a 2.29 degree observation angle to the road. The field of measurement is 1.8 inches wide and 7.9 inches long.

The Retro-Lux Model 1500 is manufactured in the United States. It is also designed to collect data at a simulated distance of 30 meters. It has a fixed measurement geometry of a 1.05 degree observation angle and an 88.76 degree entrance angle. The measurement area is approximately 3.3 by 5.9 inches. The Model 1500 system has a data logger, which enables measurements in the field to be taken and recorded automatically for later transfer to a computerized system. An auxiliary battery is available to increase the number of readings that can be taken before recharging is necessary. It uses an external reference standard plaque but also has an internal reference. After placing the instrument at the proper location on the stripe and pressing the read button, it takes about 10 seconds for a reading to appear on the screen.
4.0 RESULTS

Data were collected for three different months (June 1995, October 1995, and May 1996). For each month, data were collected on both asphalt and PCC decks, and for various types of striping materials (paints, thermoplastics, and tapes). Comparisons were made between the Mirolux and the LTL2000, the Mirolux and the Retro-Lux, and the LTL2000 and Retro-Lux. Also, the May 1996 data includes comparison of another Mirolux (referred to as the Mirolux B). Summaries of the data are given in Tables 1 through 3 for the three months. The tables show the number of data points, the best fit linear regression equation, and the correlation coefficient (R-square) value of the comparison as a function of the pavement type, retroreflectometers compared, material, and location (wheel path or centerline). The largest number of data points was for the paint due to the larger number of paint materials. The smallest number of data points was for the tapes. The number of data points for any given material varied from month to month because data collection was stopped because of either a low battery or a time constraint. The only reflectometer for which data was taken on all material for each month was the standard Mirolux.

Graphs were also prepared showing the data obtained for the various comparisons. These graphs are given in Figures 1 through 91. For each figure, the month, pavement type, type of material, location, and retroreflectometers compared are given.

The R-square values for the linear fits showed generally high values ranging from 0.65 to 0.98. The highest R-square values were found for the tapes with 23 of the 32 values over 0.90.
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<th>TYPE MATERIAL</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>DATA POINTS</th>
<th>R-SQUARE</th>
<th>EQUATION</th>
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<td>Wheel Path</td>
<td>Center</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>y = -2 + 1.03x</td>
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<td>0.97</td>
<td>y = -16 + 1.00x</td>
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<td>Center</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>y = 23 + 1.03x</td>
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<td>Center</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.91</td>
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TABLE 2. COMPARISON OF RETROREFLECTOMETER DATA (OCTOBER 1995)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DECK</th>
<th>COMPARISON</th>
<th>MATERIAL</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
<th>R-SQUARE</th>
<th>EQUATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PCC</td>
<td>Mirolux - Mirolux B</td>
<td>Paint</td>
<td>Wheel Path</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>y = 29 + 1.07x</td>
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<td>0.76</td>
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<td>0.98</td>
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<td>0.96</td>
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<td>Wheel Path</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0.92</td>
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<td>y = 17 + 0.58x</td>
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<td>0.87</td>
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<td>y = 20 + 0.57x</td>
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<td>218</td>
<td>0.84</td>
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<td>0.80</td>
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<td>0.89</td>
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<td>431</td>
<td>0.86</td>
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<td>Tapes</td>
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<td>141</td>
<td>0.83</td>
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<td>Center</td>
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<td>y = 21 + 0.99x</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995
Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track

Figure 2. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995
Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Center

$R^2 = 0.80$

$R^2 = 0.73$
Figure 3. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995
Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track

Figure 4. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995
Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Center

$R^2 = 0.91$

$R^2 = 0.71$
Figure 5. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995
Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track

Figure 6. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995
Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center

$R^2 = 0.92$

$R^2 = 0.88$
Figure 7. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995
Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track

Figure 8. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995
Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Center

$R^2 = 0.77$
Figure 9. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995
Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track

\[ R^2 = 0.82 \]

Figure 10. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995
Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Center

\[ R^2 = 0.83 \]
**Figure 11. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995**

Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track

\[ R^2 = 0.92 \]

**Figure 12. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995**

Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track

\[ R^2 = 0.79 \]
Figure 13. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995
Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Center

Figure 14. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995
Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track
Figure 15. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995
Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Center

Figure 16. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995
Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track

R^2 = 0.77
R^2 = 0.98
Figure 17. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995
Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track

\[ R^2 = 0.75 \]

Figure 18. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995
Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Center

\[ R^2 = 0.71 \]
Figure 19. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995
Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track

Figure 20. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995
Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track
Figure 21. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995
Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track

Figure 22. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, June 1995
Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center

R² = 0.90

R² = 0.91
Figure 25. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995
Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track

Figure 26. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995
Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Center

$R^2 = 0.65$

$R^2 = 0.85$
Figure 27. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995
Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track

Figure 28. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995
Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center
Figure 29. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995
Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track

Figure 30. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995
Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Center

$R^2 = 0.84$

$R^2 = 0.82$
Figure 33. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995
Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track

Figure 34. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, June 1995
Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center

$R^2 = 0.94$

$R^2 = 0.96$
Figure 35. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, October 1995
Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track

Figure 36. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, October 1995
Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Center

$R^2 = 0.72$

$R^2 = 0.81$
Figure 37. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, October 1995
Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track

Figure 38. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, October 1995
Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center
Figure 39. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995
Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track

Figure 40. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995
Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Center

\[ R^2 = 0.88 \]
Figure 41. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995
Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track

Figure 42. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995
Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Center

$R^2 = 0.90$

$R^2 = 0.83$
Figure 43. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995
Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track

Figure 44. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995
Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center

$R^2 = 0.97$
Figure 45. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995
Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track

Figure 46. Retrolux vs. LT2000 Measurements, October 1995
Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Center
Figure 47. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995
Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track

R^2 = 0.95

Figure 48. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995
Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center

R^2 = 0.98
Figure 49. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, October 1995
Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track

Figure 50. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, October 1995
Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Center

$R^2 = 0.90$

$R^2 = 0.96$
Figure 51. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, October 1995
Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track

Figure 52. Mirolux vs Retrolux Measurements, October 1995
Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center

\[ R^2 = 0.97 \]

\[ R^2 = 0.96 \]
Figure 53. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995
Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track

Figure 54. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995
Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Center

$R^2 = 0.83$

$R^2 = 0.69$
Figure 55. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995
Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track

Figure 56. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, October 1995
Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Center

$R^2 = 0.82$

$R^2 = 0.91$
Figure 59. Mirolux vs. Mirolux-B Measurements, May 1996
Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track

Figure 60. Mirolux vs. Mirolux-B Measurements, May 1996
Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Center

\[ R^2 = 0.83 \]

\[ R^2 = 0.86 \]
Figure 61. Mirolux vs. Mirolux-B Measurements, May 1996
Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track

Figure 62. Mirolux vs. Mirolux-B Measurements, May 1996
Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center
Figure 63. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, May 1996
Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track

Figure 64. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, May 1996
Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track

$R^2 = 0.87$
Figure 65. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, May 1996
Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track

Figure 66. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, May 1996
Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center
Figure 67. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996
Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track

R^2 = 0.82

Figure 68. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996
Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Center

R^2 = 0.83
Figure 69. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996
Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track

Figure 70. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996
Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track
Figure 71. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996
Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center

Figure 72. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996
Asphalt Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track
Figure 73. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996
Asphalt Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track

Figure 74. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996
Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track

R² = 0.80

R² = 0.92
Figure 75. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996
Asphalt Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center

Figure 76. Mirolux vs. Mirolux-B Measurements, May 1996
Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track
Figure 77. Mirolux vs. Mirolux-B Measurements, May 1996
Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Center

$R^2 = 0.85$

Figure 78. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, May 1996
Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track

$R^2 = 0.67$
Figure 79. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, May 1996
Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track

Figure 80. Mirolux vs. Retrolux Measurements, May 1996
Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track
Figure 83. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996
Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Center

Figure 84. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996
Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track
Figure 85. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996
Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Center

Figure 86. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996
Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track

\[ R^2 = 0.83 \]

\[ R^2 = 0.94 \]
Figure 87. Mirolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996
Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center

Figure 88. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996
Concrete Deck, Paint Lines, Wheel Track
Figure 89. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996
Concrete Deck, Thermoplastics, Wheel Track

Figure 90. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996
Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Wheel Track
Figure 91. Retrolux vs. LTL2000 Measurements, May 1996
Concrete Deck, Permanent Tapes, Center

$R^2 = 0.93$