

Oh, Bollards! Where are Concrete Bollards really needed?

By John Kandra, President of Flexpost, Inc.

After reading the article in Parking Today, "Oh Bollards!", it got me thinking of my experiences with parking lots and how the signage and sign posts have changed over the years. Not that the actual signs have changed but the sign posts are changing. It is still very typical to see traditional sign posts in parking lots, you know, the traditional U-Channel and Square-Channel steel posts. It is also very common to see these sign posts bent and some so badly bent that they make parking lots eyesores as well as hazards to vehicles and pedestrians. If you haven't done so, start checking out sign posts in parking lots over the next week or two and you will see what I am talking about. As I continued to look at sign posts in various parking lots, I started to notice that these traditional sign posts were now being wrapped in concrete! You know, those big, colorful yellow things in parking spaces, mostly at large retail stores... but why?

Concrete and steel bollards were originally designed to help keep vehicles away from certain items like building entrances, ATM machines, gas pumps, utility boxes and so on. Today we see them popping up in parking lot spaces to support these traditional steel sign posts... but for what purpose? Do \$80 sign posts really need big, concrete bollards supporting them? The only logical explanation is that parking lot owners and property managers want their signage to be noticed and not damaged by vehicles running into them.

Good idea, but in most cases, it just doesn't work....



What kind of liability does this impose on the parking lot owners, vehicle owners and pedestrians? And, for the property owner, how much does it cost to install a concrete or steel bollard around a sign post anyway? **A LOT OF MONEY!**

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In reality, every sign post in a parking lot, no matter how big or colorful, has a good chance of being hit by a driver. Drivers in parking lots are pre-occupied in trying to find a close parking spot, trying to avoid pedestrians and other vehicles, talking on their cell phones, texting their friends that sign posts just get hit and get hit a lot! Just ask any insurance company!

This is why concrete and steel bollards should NEVER have found their way into parking lot spaces! They are a liability to establishments, a hazard to drivers and pedestrians and an unnecessary expense for parking lot owners.

So what is the answer? Technology! No, I don't mean the iPad or iPhone type of technology but the technology of the new sign posts that have also been popping up recently in parking lots... you know those "flexible" and "springy" kind of posts and bollards. These simple but effective units not only keep parking lots looking good but are less hazardous than those big, expensive and unnecessary concrete and steel bollard sign posts. When flexible sign posts or flexible bollards are hit by vehicles, they bounce back to their original positions with no damage to the vehicles or parking lot surfaces.

So, hopefully in the future, we will continue to see more of the new technology sign posts and bollards, the flexible and springy kind, popping up more in parking lot spaces and hopefully replacing those big and hazardous concrete and steel bollard sign posts. I know my insurance company would appreciate the change!

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