



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

Federal Aviation  
Administration

# Advisory Circular

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**Subject:** Painting, Marking, and Lighting of  
Vehicles Used on an Airport

**Date:** April 1, 2010

**AC No:** AC 150/5210-5D

**Initiated by:** AAS-100

**Change:**

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1. **PURPOSE.** This advisory circular (AC) provides guidance, specifications, and standards for painting, marking, and lighting of vehicles operating in the airport air operations area (AOA). The approved lights, colors, and markings herein assure the conspicuity of vehicles operating in the AOA from both the ground and the air.

2. **CANCELLATION.** This AC cancels AC 150/5210-5C, Painting, Marking, and Lighting of Vehicles Used on an Airport, dated August 31, 2007.

3. **APPLICATION.** The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recommends the guidelines and standards in this Advisory Circular for vehicles operating in the airport AOA. In general, use of this AC is not mandatory. *However*, use of this AC is mandatory for vehicles funded with federal grant monies through the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) and/or with revenue from the Passenger Facility Charges (PFC) Program. See Grant Assurance No. 34, "Policies, Standards, and Specifications," and PFC Assurance No. 9, "Standard and Specifications."

Vehicles covered by this AC that do not meet this standard may be used until the vehicle is repainted or replaced, but no later than **December 31, 2010**.

4. **PRINCIPAL CHANGES.** This AC contains new specifications and recommendations for the painting, marking, and lighting of Towbarless Tow Vehicles (TLTVs).

5. **METRIC UNITS.** To promote an orderly transition to metric units, this AC includes both English and metric dimensions. The metric conversions may not be exact equivalents, and until there is an official changeover to the metric system, the English dimensions will govern.

6. **COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS** for improvements to this AC should be sent to:

Manager, Airport Engineering Division  
Federal Aviation Administration  
ATTN: AAS-100  
800 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20591

Michael J. O'Donnell  
Director of Airport Safety and Standards

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## **PAINTING, MARKING, AND LIGHTING OF VEHICLES USED ON AN AIRPORT**

### **1. SOURCES OF APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS.**

- a.** American National Standards Institute, Inc. (ANSI), 25 West 43rd St. 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10036. Website: [www.ansi.org](http://www.ansi.org)
- b.** American Society for Testing & Materials (ASTM), ASTM International, 100 Barr Harbor Drive, P.O. Box C700, West Conshohocken, PA 19428-2959. Website: [www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org)
- c.** The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, Massachusetts 02169-7471. Website: [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)
- d.** The U. S. General Services Administration (GSA), Centralized Mailing List Services, 501 West Felix Street, Whse 9, South End P.O. Box 6477, Fort Worth, Texas 76115-6477. Website: [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov)
- e.** The Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, 732 North Capitol St. NW, Washington, DC 20401.
- f.** Society of Automotive Engineers, Inc. (SAE), 400 Commonwealth Drive, Warrendale, PA 15096-0001. Website: [www.sae.org](http://www.sae.org)
- g.** FAA Advisory Circulars: U.S. Department of Transportation, Subsequent Distribution Office, Ardmore East Business Center, 3341 Q 75<sup>th</sup> Ave., Landover, MD 20785. Website: [www.faa.gov](http://www.faa.gov)
- h.** FAA Engineering Briefs: [www.faa.gov/airports/engineering/engineering\\_briefs/](http://www.faa.gov/airports/engineering/engineering_briefs/)

### **2. DEFINITIONS.** The following definitions apply in this AC:

- a. Vehicle** – All conveyances, except aircraft, used on the ground to transport persons, cargo, equipment or those required to perform maintenance, construction, service, and security duties.
- b. Air Operations Area (AOA)** – The portion of airport that encompasses the landing, take off, taxiing, and parking areas for aircraft.
- c. Airport Emergency Vehicles** – Vehicles that are authorized in the AOA for emergency purposes (e.g., ambulances, aircraft rescue and fire fighting (ARFF) vehicles and emergency response vehicles) as authorized by the airport traffic control tower (ATCT) or an authorized on-site accident/incident commander.
- d. Airport Operations Vehicles** – Vehicles routinely used by airport operations personnel for airport inspection and duties associated with airfield operations (such as airfield condition reporting and Incident Command) on the AOA and Movement Area.
- e. Airport Security Vehicles** – Vehicles that are authorized in the AOA for security purposes, as needed (e.g. police cars).

- f. Airfield Service Vehicles** – Vehicles that are routinely used in the AOA for airfield service, maintenance, or construction (e.g. snow blowers, snowplows, maintenance trucks, and tractors).
- g. Aircraft Support Vehicles** – Vehicles that are routinely used in the AOA to support aircraft operations (e.g. aircraft pushback tractors, baggage/cargo tractors or trucks, air conditioning and aviation fuel trucks). These vehicles are typically owned by airlines, vendors, or contractors and are not eligible for Federal funding.
- h. Reduced Visibility** – Prevailing visibility is less than one statute mile (1609 meters) and/or the runway visual range (RVR) is less than 6,000 feet (1830 meters).
- i. Movement Area** – The runways, taxiways, and other areas of an airport/heliport that are used for taxiing/hover taxiing, air taxiing, takeoff, and landing of aircraft, exclusive of loading ramps and parking areas. At those airports/heliports with an operating airport traffic control tower (ATCT), specific approval for entry onto the movement area must be obtained from air traffic control (ATC).
- j. Other Vehicles** – Vehicles that are not routinely authorized in the AOA (e.g. construction vehicles). These vehicles are typically owned by airlines, vendors, or contractors and are not eligible for Federal funding.
- k. Peak Intensity** – Peak intensity, for purposes of this document, means the maximum magnitude of luminescence as measured in candela.
- l. Towbarless Tow Vehicle (TLTV)** – a type of aircraft support vehicle whose main purpose is to tow aircraft in the AOA by way of nose gear capture.

### 3. VEHICLE PAINTING.

**NOTE:** *Airport vehicle paint and markings are a safety of flight requirement. The approved colors/markings herein assure conspicuity of vehicles operating in the AOA from both the ground and air.*

#### **a. Airport Emergency Vehicles.**

**(1) Ambulances.** Ambulance vehicles are painted per the most current version of Federal Specification KKK-A-1822, *Federal Specification for the Star-of-Life Ambulance*. Ambulances are not considered vehicles routinely operating on the AOA.

**(2) Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) Vehicles.** Yellowish-green is the vehicle color standard. Color specifications are per Appendix A.

**NOTE:** *A yellowish-green color provides optimum visibility during all light levels encountered during a 24-hour day and under variations of light that result from weather and seasonal changes.*

**b. Airport Operations Vehicles.** Airport operations vehicles may be painted in colors designated by the airport operator. The characteristics must be coordinated with the respective ATCT and identified in the tower letter of agreement.

**c. Airport Security Vehicles.** Comply with specific state or local requirements.

**d. Airfield Service Vehicles.** Chrome yellow is the vehicle color standard. Color specifications are per Appendix A. When vehicles are equipped with bumper bars 8 inches (200 mm) or more in depth, the bars must be painted in alternate stripes 4 inches (100 mm) in width of chrome yellow and black inclined 45° to the vertical.

**e. Aircraft Support Vehicles.**

(1) Any color or combination of colors other than yellowish-green or chrome yellow. The bumper bar paint scheme in paragraph 3.d (of alternating chrome yellow and black stripe) is recommended.

(2) **TLTVs.** International orange is the vehicle color standard. Retroreflective tape covering more than 25 percent of the vehicle's vertical surfaces may be used as a temporary measure to meet this standard prior to scheduled vehicle painting.

**f. Other Vehicles.** Any color or combination of colors other than solid black or white.

#### 4. VEHICLE MARKING.

**a. Airport Emergency Vehicles.**

(1) **Ambulances.** Ambulances are marked per the most current version of Federal Specification KKK-A-1822.

(2) **ARFF Vehicles.** Emergency rescue and fire fighting vehicles are marked with the letters "ARFF," "Fire," or "Rescue" and in accordance with 4.c.(1)-(5) of this AC.

**b. Airport Operations Vehicles.** Airport operations vehicles may be marked as designated by the airport operator. Marking must be coordinated with the respective ATCT and identified in the tower letter of agreement.

**c. Airfield Service Vehicles and Aircraft Support Vehicles.**

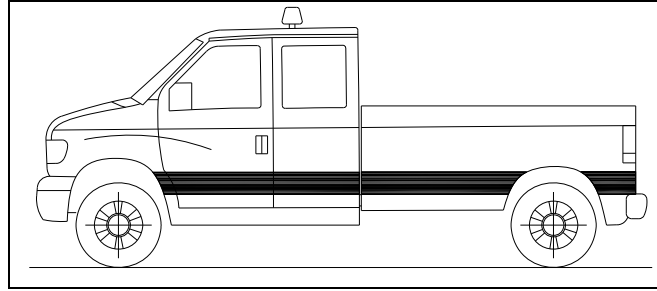
(1) Airport operator owned vehicles must display an identification number on each side and on the roof (the hood should be used if the vehicle has no roof).

(2) Side numbers will be a minimum of 16 inches (410 mm) in height and conspicuously located.

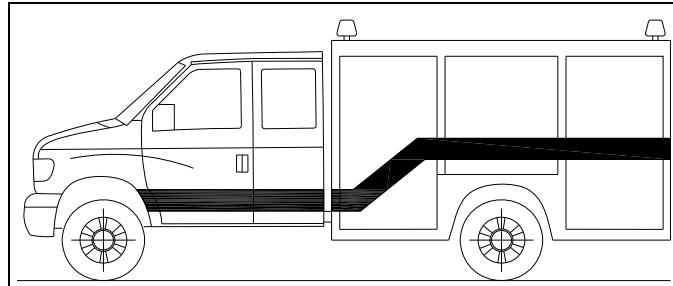
(3) Roof numbers will be a minimum of 24 inches (610 mm) in height and affixed with their bases toward the front of the vehicle. The identification numbers should provide sharp color contrast to the vehicle color.

(4) In addition to the identification numbers, airport operator-owned vehicles must display either the name of the airport and/or the airport insignia.

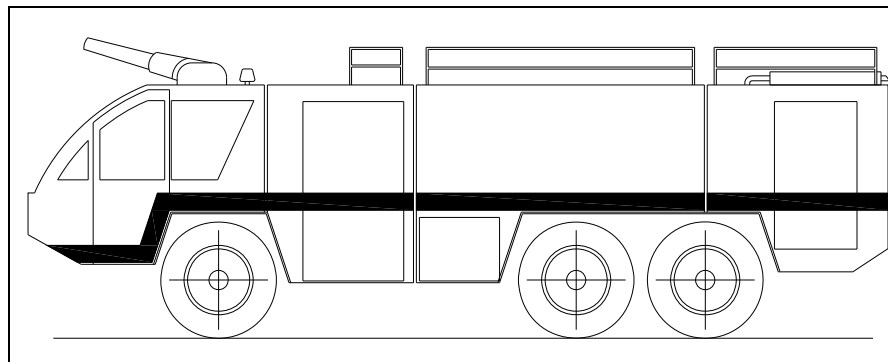
(5) To further improve night-time recognition of vehicles, a minimum 8 inch (200 mm) wide horizontal band of high gloss white paint or white reflective tape (Retroreflective, ASTM-D 4956-09, *Standard Specification for Retroreflective Sheeting for Traffic Control*, Type III & above) must be used around the vehicle's surface. Figures 1, 2, and 3 show suggested locations for the horizontal reflective band.



**Figure 1: Suggested location for the horizontal reflective band, Option 1**

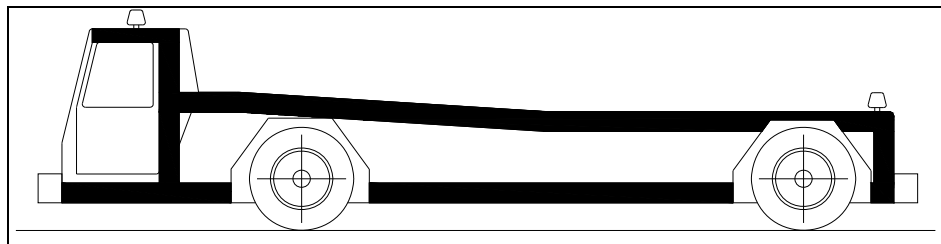


**Figure 2: Suggested location for the horizontal reflective band, Option 2**



**Figure 3: Suggested location for the horizontal reflective band, Option 3**

(6) **TLTVs.** Retroreflective tape is used to outline the shape of a TLTV. If the vertical edge of the vehicle is rounded, the tape should be placed on the rounded portion to reflect light in both the horizontal and vertical planes. Where the placement of the tape may interfere with, or may be worn down by, maintenance or operational activities, tape is not required. Suggested locations for the retroreflective bands are shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4: Suggested placement of retroreflective tape on a TLTV**

**d. Airport Security and Other Vehicles.**

- (1) Vehicles other than those that routinely traverse any portion of the AOA under the control of ATC, which are not escorted by a vehicle in constant two-way radio communication with ATC and properly equipped and authorized to operate in the AOA, must be provided with a flag on a staff attached to the vehicle so that the flag will be readily visible.
- (2) At airports without air traffic control facilities, flags must be provided on all vehicles.
- (3) The flag must be at least a 3-foot by 3-foot (0.9 meter by 0.9 meter) square having a checkered pattern of international orange and white squares at least 1 foot (300 mm) on each side (see Appendix A for the fabric color specification).

**5. VEHICLE LIGHTING.**

**a. Airfield Service, Aircraft Support, and Airport Operations Vehicles.**

- (1) The standard for identification lighting is a yellow flashing light that is mounted on the uppermost part of the vehicle structure. A steady yellow light designates vehicles limited to non-movement areas.
- (2) The light must be visible from any direction, day and night, including from the air.
- (3) Color specifications for vehicle identification lights are per Appendix B.
- (4) **TLTVs.** An LED light bar placed above the operator's cab may be used in place of the rotating yellow flashing light. In addition, a yellow flashing light (of any type) must be installed on the upper left-rear and right-rear corners of the TLTV, and must be activated when an aircraft is in tow. The size of the rear flashing lights must be large enough to meet the requirements of Section 5.c, but not so large as to interfere with the normal or towing operations of the TLTV.

**b. Airport Emergency, Security, and Other Vehicles,** which are not escorted by a properly lighted vehicle, must be identified during periods of low visibility by a light.

**c. Characteristics of Flashing Lights:**

- (1) Ambulance lights must meet the specifications in the most current version of Federal Specification KKK-A-1822, and ARFF vehicles must meet NFPA, state, and local requirements.
- (2) Lights must have peak intensity within the range of 40 to 400 candelas (effective) from 0° (horizontal) up to 10° above the horizontal and for 360° horizontally. The upper limit of 400 candelas (effective) is necessary to avoid damage to night vision.
- (3) From 10° to 15° above the horizontal plane, the light output must be 1/10<sup>th</sup> of peak intensity or between 4 and 40 candelas (effective).

- (4) Lights must flash at  $75 \pm 15$  flashes per minute.

**NOTES:**

1. *The effective intensity of a flashing light is equal to the intensity of a steady-burning (fixed) light of the same color that produces the same visual range under identical conditions of observation.*

2. *If xenon flashtubes are used, refer to AC 150/5345-43, Specification for Obstruction Lighting Equipment, for guidance concerning methods of calculating effective intensity.*

**d. Light Colors.**

**(1) Airport Emergency Vehicles.**

(a) **Ambulances.** Per the most current version of Federal Specification KKK-A-1822.

(b) **ARFF Vehicles.** Red or a combination of red-and-white flashing lights per the chromaticity requirements in Appendix B.

**(2) Airport Security Vehicles.** Signal blue or a combination of red and signal blue flashing light per the chromaticity requirements in Appendix B.

**(3) Airfield Service, Aircraft Support, Airport Operations, and Other Vehicles.** Yellow flashing light per the chromaticity requirements in Appendix B.



**APPENDIX A. COLOR SPECIFICATIONS**

**A-1. SPECIFICATIONS.** Colors specified in Table A-1 are per the Commission Internationale de l'Eclairage (CIE) L\*a\*b\* system of color specification. For a description of this system, refer to American Society for Testing & Materials (ASTM) D 2244, *Standard Practice for Calculation of Color Tolerances and Color Differences from Instrumentally Measured Color Coordinates*.

**Table A-1. Specification for vehicle and flag colors**

Standard Illuminant D65 Usage	Chrome Yellow			Yellowish-Green			International Orange		
	Vehicle Paint			Vehicle Paint			Vehicle Paint / Flag Fabric		
CIELAB DATA	L*	a*	b*	L*	a*	b*	L*	a*	b*
Centroid Color	72.8	24.4	77.6	78.3	-10.2	80.4	45.0	53.5	52.0
Point 1	72.8	31.8	82.9	78.3	-9.0	92.0	45.0	61.4	47.8
Point 2	72.8	25.5	66.7	78.3	-7.6	73.2	45.0	53.9	41.4
Point 3	72.8	18.0	69.3	78.3	-11.0	69.3	45.0	53.5	53.4
Point 4	72.8	22.4	86.0	78.3	-13.4	86.2	45.0	49.7	60.4
Light Limit	77.8			83.3			49.9		
Dark Limit	67.8			73.3			41.6		
Max ΔE	11.1			11.7			10.7		

**A-2. COLOR TESTS.** Acceptable colors are those that meet the gloss rating test and either a visual or an instrumental color test as follows:

**NOTE:** *Flag fabric colors must meet either the instrumental tests in Table A-1 or the visual method described in paragraph A-2b(1).*

**a. Gloss Rating Test.** This test is performed per ASTM D 523, *Standard Test Method for Specular Gloss*, on a paint sample of the color to be applied on the vehicle. An acceptable color sample is high gloss with a minimum gloss rating of 70 units, for 60° geometry.

**b. Color Test Methods:**

**(1) Visual.** Prepare a master specimen of the color (per Table A-1) and gloss (per paragraph A-2a). This specimen will be the master color and be used as the basis of comparison per ASTM D 5531-05, *Standard Guide for the Preparation, Maintenance, and Distribution of Physical Product Standards for Color and Geometric Appearance of Coatings*. To verify the paint color of a vehicle visually, vehicle paint samples must be

prepared and viewed per ASTM D 1729-96 (Reapproved 2009), *Standard Practice for Visual Appraisal of Colors and Color Differences of Diffusely-Illuminated Opaque Materials*.

**(2) Instrumental.** This test requires a test specimen sample and reference to Table A-1. All test specimen measurements should be conducted per ASTM E 1164-09a *Standard Practice for Obtaining Spectrometric Data for Object-Color Evaluation*. Test specimen tolerances must be per Table A-1 per the following:

(a) Plot the centroid color using the a\* and b\* CIELAB coordinate data from Table A-1 on graph paper or by entry of the coordinate data into a computer program. Plot and connect points 1 through 4 from the same table to form a quadrilateral; noting that the centroid color is within this figure. See Figure A-1 for plots of all three color specifications in Table A-1.

(b) Perform color sample measurements per ASTM E 1164-09a. If necessary, convert measurements to CIELAB L\*, a\*, and b\* color space. See ASTM E 308-08, *Standard Practice for Computing the Colors of Objects by Using the CIE System*, for color space conversion formulae.

(c) An acceptable color is one that meets:

(i) the chromaticity requirements of the color samples a\* and b\* CIELAB coordinate data by falling within the quadrilateral;

(ii) the L\* data lightness requirement by falling within the range defined by the light and dark data of Table A-1;

(iii) the total color difference ( $\Delta E$ ) by not exceeding the limits in Table A-1 when the CIELAB data are computed in the following formula:

$$\Delta E = (\Delta L^{*2} + \Delta a^{*2} + \Delta b^{*2})^{\frac{1}{2}}$$

where  $\Delta L^*$ ,  $\Delta a^*$ , and  $\Delta b^*$  values are the differences between those values for the centroid color in Table A-1 and those of the color sample measurements.

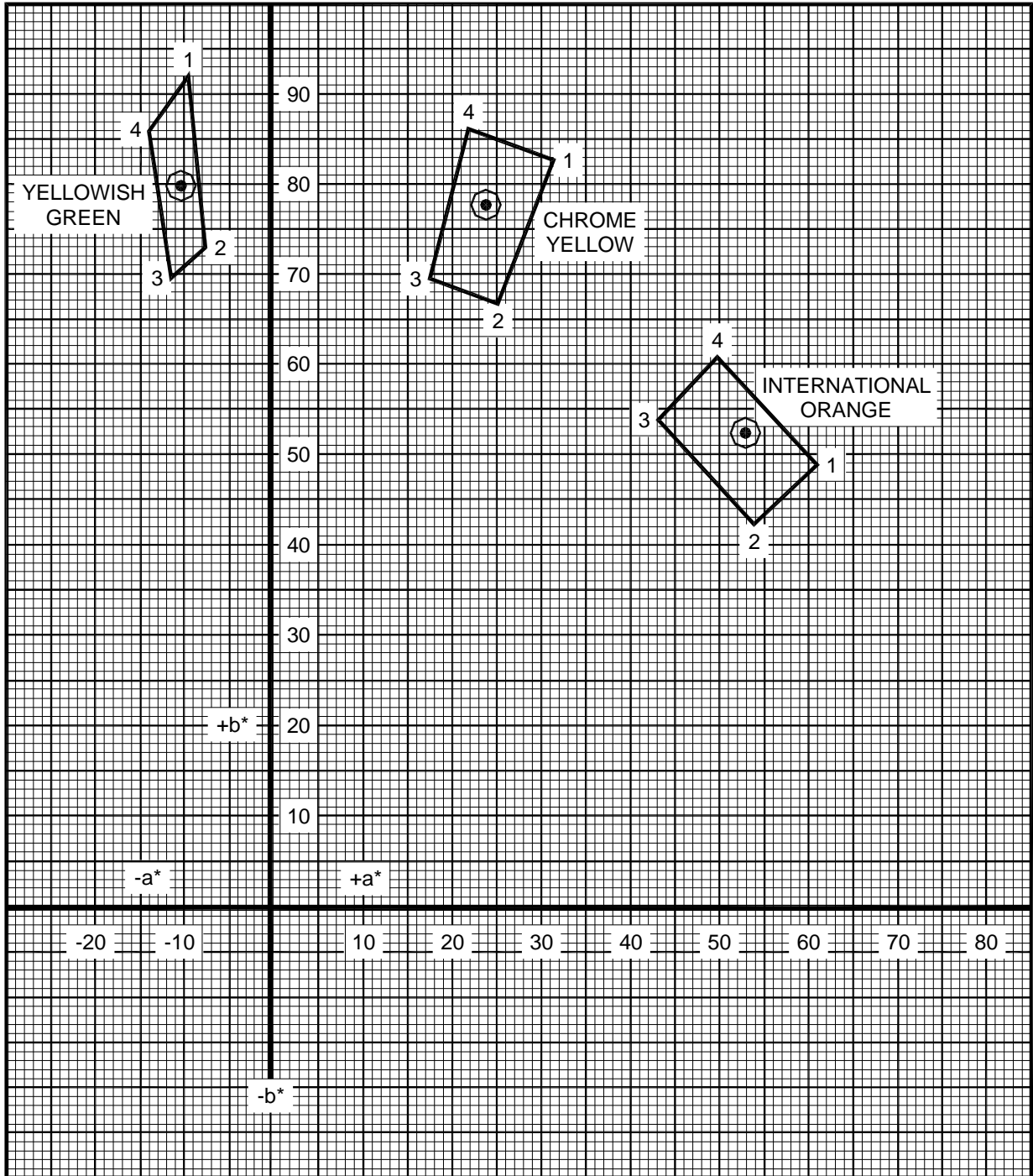


Figure A-1. Plot of selected color paint specifications

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**APPENDIX B. COLOR SPECIFICATIONS FOR VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION LIGHTS**

**B-1. SPECIFICATIONS.** The Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) Standard J578 Revised December 2006, *Color Specification*, defines the acceptable color boundary limits and measurement of emitted red, white, signal blue, and yellow light for vehicle lights. This standard applies to the overall emitted color of light from the device in lieu of emitted light from any small area of the lens. The color of emitted light must fall within the color boundaries per SAE J578 Revised December 2006 (color boundary equations are in the standard) using color measurement methods detailed in the standard. See FAA Engineering Brief #67, *Light Sources Other Than Incandescent and Xenon for Airport and Obstruction Lighting Fixtures*, for additional information and *Alternative Lighting Devices*.

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