



Left Turn Signals

There are three types of left-turn signal phases:

Permissive  or 

Vehicles are given a circular green light or flashing yellow arrow* and required to wait for an adequate gap in the opposing traffic prior to making their turn. This type of control is commonly signed "Left Turn Yield on Green" or "Left Turn Signal / Yield on Flashing Arrow."

Protected 

Vehicles may turn only when they receive a green arrow while opposing vehicles are stopped by a red light. This type of control is commonly signed "left turn signal."

Protected/Permissive  or 

Vehicles are given a protected phase (green arrow), followed by a permissive (circular green) or flashing yellow arrow* phase, when drivers must choose an adequate gap in opposing traffic. This type of control is commonly signed "Left Turn Yield on Green" or "Left Turn Signal / Yield on Flashing Arrow."

*Refer to "What to know about Flashing Yellow Arrow" brochure for more details.

All Direction Flashing Traffic Signals

Flashing traffic signals may occur during emergencies, night time/low traffic volume periods and special events. Flashing traffic signals have the following meanings:

Flashing Red

Drivers should stop at a clearly marked stop line or at the point nearest the intersecting roadway where the driver has a view of approaching traffic before proceeding. The driver stopping for a flashing red should assume a flashing yellow on the cross street if they approach the intersection and are not sure of the other indications.

Flashing Yellow

Drivers should proceed through the intersection with caution.

Pedestrian Signals

Pedestrian signals are installed at intersections with high foot traffic volumes or where currently installed signals don't meet the pedestrian's needs. Pedestrian signals consist of illuminated symbols to indicate when it is safe for pedestrians to cross.

Walk 

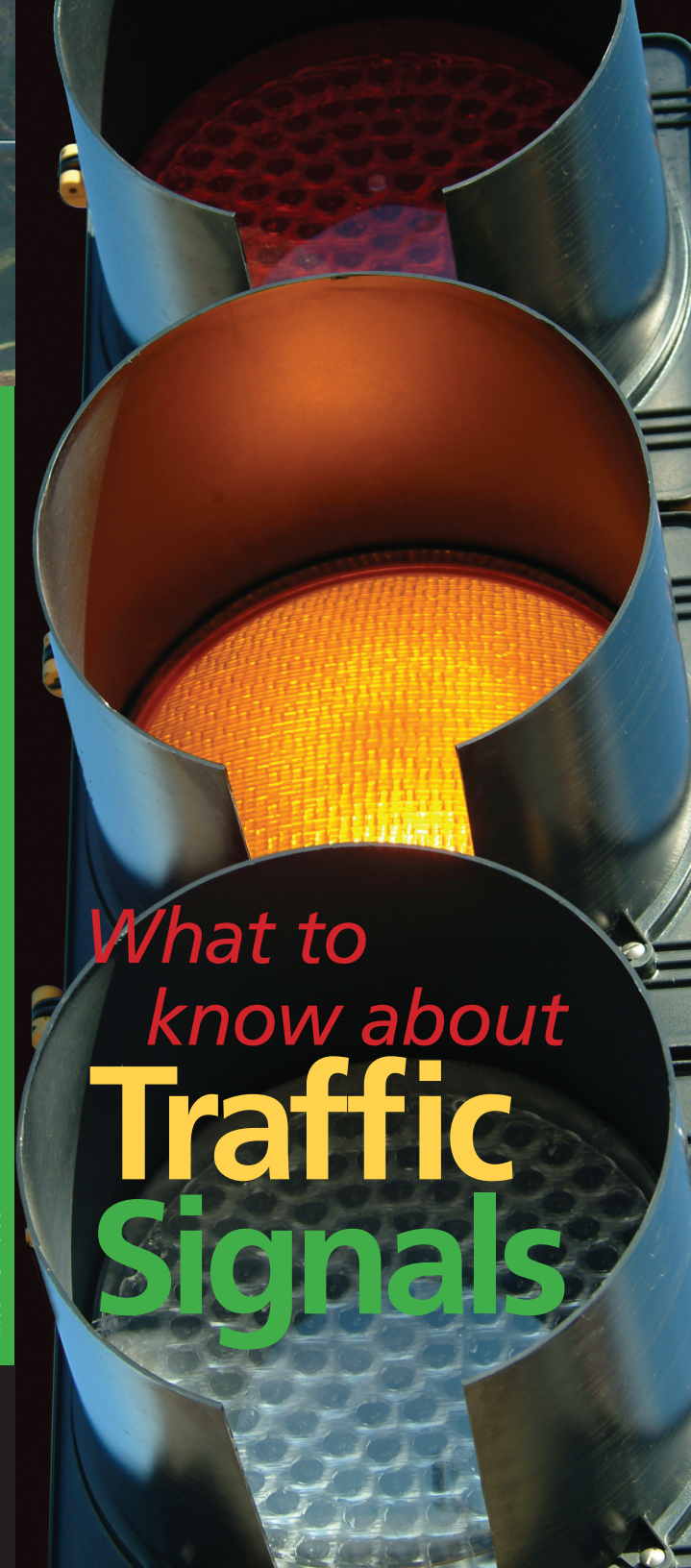
It is okay to cross but pedestrians should watch for vehicles.

Flashing Don't Walk

Don't start crossing but pedestrians should finish crossing if they have already started.

Don't Walk 

Don't cross and stay out of crosswalk.



*What to
know about*
**Traffic
Signals**

TR08.145 10.08



For more information about traffic signals contact:

Missouri Department of Transportation
888-ASK-MODOT (275-6636)
www.modot.org

Missouri has the *seventh-largest highway system* in the country with more than 32,000 miles of state roadways and more than 2,300 traffic signals on those roadways; making traffic signals an important issue.

The first electric signal in the United States was installed in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1914. From those modest beginnings, traffic-signal technology has become critical in the safe and efficient control of traffic on our roadways.

Traffic Signals



What is a Traffic Signal?

A traffic signal controls the right of way for vehicles and pedestrians arriving at an intersection. When installed properly, a traffic signal can reduce traffic delay and the amount of crashes.

Traffic signals generally consist of red, yellow and green lenses installed from top to bottom or left to right; however, some signals have yellow and green arrow lenses.

The timing for each signal is determined based on traffic volume and traffic patterns in each area. The lengths of signal timing cycles are usually 45 to 120 seconds. In some areas of the state, MoDOT engineers control signal operations from a command center and physically adjust timing in the event of a traffic jam or crash.

Signal Installation

Several factors, set by the Federal Highway Administration, justify traffic signal installation. These factors include: number of vehicles, pedestrian activity, vehicle speeds, crash history, city population and number of traffic lanes. Traffic engineers conduct a study to determine if it is appropriate to install a signal. MoDOT has installed approximately 2,300 traffic signals throughout the state.

Signal Advantages

Properly located and controlled traffic signals have the following advantages:

- Allow for orderly traffic flow.
- Can increase the amount of traffic an intersection is able to handle.

- Can reduce the crash frequency, particularly right-angle crashes.
- Can be coordinated for nearly continuous traffic flow along a given route.
- Can be used to interrupt heavy traffic to permit side traffic to enter or cross a major roadway.

Signal Disadvantages

Traffic signals are not always a “cure-all” for traffic problems at intersections. An improper or unnecessary signal installation:

- Can cause excessive delay, resulting in a significant waste of fuel and higher costs to motorists.
- Can increase the use of less-adequate routes to avoid the signals.
- Can increase crash frequency from drivers who run red lights.