



TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION
FACT SHEETS

**FLASHING YELLOW ARROW
LEFT TURN SIGNALS**

A new style of left-turn signal is being seen on roads throughout the state of Michigan. The new style signal is known as "flashing-yellow-arrow left-turn signal" (FYA left-turn signal), and offers a safer, more efficient way to handle traffic turning left at busy intersections.

The FYA left-turn signals are being introduced nationwide and ultimately will be required at intersections where there is a separate left-turn-arrow signal. The new signals are being installed as a result of a national study, conducted for the Federal Highway Administration, which demonstrated that the new signals help prevent crashes, move more traffic through an intersection and provide additional traffic management flexibility for road agencies.

This new type of signal is placed OVER the left-turn lane at a signalized intersection. One of the displays on the signal includes a flashing yellow arrow. Other displays on the signal are a steady green arrow, steady yellow arrow and steady red arrow.

This type of signal is being used by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC), the City of Pontiac, Wayne County Roads and other road agencies throughout the state in place of the flashing-red left-turn signals that are now common. The FYA left-turn signal will be used when new left turn signalization is installed and when existing flashing-red left-turn signals are replaced/upgraded.

The new FYA left-turn signals will make the intersections safer while reducing traffic delays. When the flashing-yellow arrow is displayed, motorists are allowed to turn left when available gaps in oncoming traffic are present. Motorists may also turn left when a green arrow is displayed and oncoming traffic has stopped. You should not turn left when the red left-turn arrow is displayed.

Although there are several ways to operate the four-arrow signal there are two ways that they will typically be operated:

LEADING LEFT TURN (GREEN ARROW FIRST) SIGNAL SEQUENCE

STEADY-GREEN ARROW:

Left turns are allowed and oncoming traffic has a red signal. (At intersections with vehicle detection, either by cameras or in-pavement sensors, this sequence may be skipped if there are no left turning vehicles.)

STEADY-YELLOW ARROW:

Much like the yellow signal in a traditional traffic signal, this yellow arrow warns drivers that the left-turn signal is about to turn red, and they should prepare to stop or complete their left turn if they are within the intersection.

STEADY-RED ARROW:

At the end of the steady-yellow arrow, a steady-red arrow will appear. Motorists turning left must stop and wait.

FLASHING-YELLOW ARROW:

This arrow will activate when oncoming traffic has a green light. Motorists may turn left when there is a sufficient gap in oncoming traffic (after oncoming traffic and pedestrians have cleared).

STEADY-YELLOW ARROW:

The left-turn signal is about to turn red and motorists should prepare to stop or complete their left turn if they are within the intersection. Oncoming through traffic will also have a solid yellow signal.

STEADY-RED ARROW:

Motorists turning left must stop and wait.

LAGGING LEFT TURN (GREEN ARROW AT END) SIGNAL SEQUENCE

FLASHING-YELLOW ARROW:

This arrow will activate when oncoming traffic has a green light. Motorists may turn left when there is a sufficient gap in oncoming traffic (after oncoming traffic and pedestrians have cleared).

STEADY-GREEN ARROW:

Left turns are allowed and oncoming traffic has a red signal. (At intersections with vehicle detection, either by cameras or in-pavement sensors, this sequence may be skipped if there are no left turning vehicles).

STEADY-YELLOW ARROW:

The left-turn signal is about to turn red and motorists should prepare to stop or complete their left turn if they are within the intersection. Oncoming through traffic will also have a solid yellow signal.

STEADY-RED ARROW:

Motorists turning left must stop and wait.

In summary all agencies in the state and nation will be installing most new left-turn signals where determined to be needed and converting most intersections that have left-turn signals to flashing-yellow-arrow left-turn signals for the following reasons:

1. The new signal configuration has been found to be safer. The national study demonstrated that drivers made fewer mistakes with the new signals than with traditional left-turn-arrow signals.
2. The new signals provide traffic engineers with more options to handle variable traffic volumes.
3. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has initiated the process of making these signals the standard for signalized left turns. It will, however, take a number of years for the standard to be adopted and implemented by all road agencies and municipalities nationwide.

For more information about flashing-yellow-arrow left-turn signals, visit the Web site <http://projects.kittelson.com/pplt/>.