



TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERING DIVISION FACT SHEETS

Flashing Beacons

What are the different types of flashing beacons and how are they used?

Why aren't flashing beacons used more?

Why are there flashing beacons on some stop signs and not others?



What are the different types of flashing beacons and how are they used?

As defined in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, a flashing beacon is a traffic signal with one or more signal sections that operates in a flashing mode. It can provide traffic control when used as an intersection control beacon, or it can provide a warning function when used in other applications. Beacon applications consist of the following.

1. **Intersection Control Beacons** consist of one or more flashing circular yellow or flashing circular red indications facing each approach to an intersection. Flashing yellow indications face major street approaches that are uncontrolled and flashing red indications face approaches under Stop sign control.
2. **Warning Beacons** incorporate one or more flashing circular yellow indications for the following purposes:
 - a. Supplemental emphasis to signs or object markers for obstructions in or near the roadway;
 - b. Supplemental emphasis to warning signs;
 - c. Emphasis for uncontrolled crosswalks (see Pedestrian Crossing Beacons Fact Sheet);
 - d. Supplemental emphasis to certain regulatory signs; and
 - e. In conjunction with a regulatory or warning sign that includes the phrase "When Flashing" to indicate when the regulation is in effect or when the warning sign condition is present.
3. **Speed Limit Sign Beacons** incorporate one or more flashing circular yellow indications to provide supplemental emphasis. It may be used to indicate when the displayed speed limit is in effect.
4. **Stop Sign Beacons** incorporate one or more flashing circular red indications that are mounted next to the sign. They can supplement "Do Not Enter" and "Wrong Way" signs as well as Stop signs.



Why aren't flashing beacons used more?

For traffic control devices to be effective, they must command the attention and respect of motorists. Immediately after seeing a flashing beacon, motorists should consistently see an unusual condition which requires special attention. If the device seems arbitrary or unnecessary, motorists will quickly learn to ignore it. This can result in a disregard for all beacons, even those that are truly needed. However, if you believe a safety or operational issue exists that warrants the installation of a flashing beacon, please report it at <https://seeclickfix.com/las-vegas>. An engineering study will be conducted, and a beacon or other mitigation will be implemented if justified.

Why are there flashing beacons on some stop signs and not others?

The city utilizes stop sign beacons as one useful tool to provide supplemental emphasis where there is a demonstrated need (e.g., background distraction or wide approach). Other tools include oversize stop signs and the placement of supplemental stop signs in the median on the left-side of the approach. As described above, overuse of stop sign beacons needs to be avoided so their effectiveness is not diminished where they are truly needed.

Want More Information?

This flyer is for general purposes only. For more information, please contact the city of Las Vegas Department of Public Works, Transportation Engineering Division at (702) 229-6331 or <https://seeclickfix.com/las-vegas>

NOTE: The **Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)** is used throughout the country as the standard by which traffic control decisions are made. Nevada Revised Statute 484A.430 requires its use for placement of all traffic control devices. Find the **complete** MUTCD at <https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/> or scan the QR code.



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