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Frequently Asked Questions FYA SIGNALS



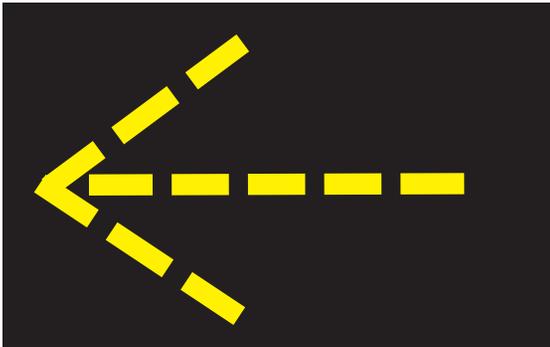
How do Flashing Yellow Arrow Traffic Signals Work?



More efficient and safe traffic flow

Flashing Yellow Arrow (FYA) traffic signals are being used more and more frequently throughout the state. The FYA signal is more efficient (it moves more traffic safely through an intersection) and improves safety. A national study showed that drivers made fewer mistakes with the new signals than with traditional signals.

The new signals give traffic engineers more options to handle variable traffic volumes. The signal also saves on motorists' fuel and time at intersections. In the coming years, as funding allows, this type of signal will become more and more common in Idaho as new signals are installed or existing signals are replaced during construction or maintenance.



How does the Flashing Yellow Arrow differ from normal traffic signals?

Historically, the green ball governing left turns has led some motorists to wrongly think they have a protected turn - a "green means go" mindset.

In contrast, drivers seem to intuitively know that the flashing yellow is communicating the need for them to use caution when making the left turn.

How does the FYA signal work?

The flashing yellow arrow means, "proceed with caution and yield to oncoming traffic." The signal has four phases:

PHASE 1. Green Arrow represents a protected turn. Oncoming traffic must stop. Proceed with caution. This phase may be skipped if there are no left-turning vehicles in the queue.

PHASE 2. Flashing Yellow Arrow: Left turn permitted. Proceed with caution (oncoming traffic has a green light) and yield to oncoming traffic.

PHASE 3. Solid Yellow Arrow: Prepare to stop, or complete the turn if you are already within the intersection - the arrow is about to turn red.

PHASE 4. Solid Red Arrow: STOP!



FYA signal in Middleton. Photo courtesy *Middleton Gazette*.

The FYA will replace the permissive green "ball" traditionally used in traffic-signal configurations. Flashing yellow arrows indicate a permitted move for drivers turning left; they can make a left turn but must yield to oncoming traffic. If the signal detects that vehicles are not moving through the left-turn lane, a solid green arrow phase will follow, providing protected left-turn movements.



How widespread is the use of FYA traffic signals?

FYA signals are being used more and more frequently throughout the state. A four-section head is the standard, but a three-section head may be used in areas with height restrictions.

You'll see the same signals in every state because the new signals are being introduced throughout the United States.

The Federal Highway Administration has already begun the process of making FYA signals standard for signalized protected or permitted left turns.

FYA signals - why?

- * It's Safer
- * It's More Efficient

