



PEDESTRIAN HYBRID BEACON

WHAT IS THE COUNTERMEASURE?

The pedestrian hybrid beacon [also known as the High intensity Activated cross Walk (or HAWK)] is a pedestrian-activated warning device located on the roadside or on mast arms over midblock pedestrian crossings. The beacon head consists of two red lenses above a single yellow lens. The beacon head is “dark” until the pedestrian desires to cross the street. At this point, the pedestrian will push an easy to reach button that activates the beacon. After displaying brief flashing and steady yellow intervals, the device displays a steady red indication to drivers and a “WALK” indication to pedestrians, allowing them to cross a major roadway while traffic is stopped. After the pedestrian phase ends, the “WALK” indication changes to a flashing orange hand to notify pedestrians that their clearance time is ending. The hybrid beacon displays alternating flashing red lights to drivers while pedestrians finish their crossings before once again going dark at the conclusion of the cycle.

The pedestrian hybrid beacon is a great intermediate option between the operational requirements and effects of a rectangular rapid flash beacon and a full pedestrian signal because it provides a positive stop control in areas without the high pedestrian traffic volumes that typically warrant the installation of a signal. In addition, the alternating red signal heads allows vehicles to proceed once the pedestrian has cleared their side of the travel lane, thus improving vehicle traffic flow.

Installation of the pedestrian hybrid beacon has been shown to provide the following safety benefits:

- Up to a 69 percent reduction in pedestrian crashes, and
- Up to a 29 percent reduction in total roadway crashes.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?

We promoted this countermeasure through the Focus State / Focus Cities national initiative for pedestrian and bicycle safety. We also presented workshops in the California Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) Challenge Area #8 team meetings to showcase the safety benefits, low-cost implementation techniques and pointers for designing and delivering public education programs for public acceptance of the pedestrian hybrid beacon.

WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO? – SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES, LESSONS LEARNED, POINTERS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Caltrans has recently started experimenting with this countermeasure in the context of Road Diets and corridor-level systemic pedestrian safety improvements on the state highway system in Districts 1 and 4. We would like to coordinate with the project managers in these two districts to learn from their experiences and facilitate statewide peer exchange with the other districts and local agencies.

- <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist1/beacon/>
- <http://www.ktvu.com/news/news/local-govt-politics/sf-officials-unveil-new-pedestrian-traffic-beacon-nZ7dr/>

City of Scottsdale, AZ: Pedestrian hybrid beacon with retroreflective backplates

