

Pedestrian Signals

Pedestrian signal improve pedestrian safety at signalized intersections. For many years, traffic volumes were much lower, and pedestrians could take their cues from the same traffic lights as motorists. With the growth of our population, pedestrian signals were introduced to provide means to separate the pedestrian from the motorists at signalized intersections.

How Do Pedestrian Signals Work?

A pedestrian signal provides a safer way for pedestrians to cross the street at signalized intersections. The pedestrian signal, when activated by a pedestrian pushing a detector button, provides time for the pedestrian to enter the street during the solid white "WALKING PERSON" symbol pedestrian signal indication and to finish crossing the street during the flashing orange "RAISED HAND" symbol pedestrian signal indication.

The pedestrian signal indicators consist of international symbols displaying a white "WALKING PERSON" symbol, and an orange "RAISED HAND". Countdown timers are also installed at some intersections.

The pedestrian signal sequence begins when the white "WALKING PERSON" symbol is solidly illuminated. This sequence is normally 4 to 7 seconds long and allows enough time for the pedestrian to leave the curb and begin crossing the street in the direction of the white "WALKING PERSON" indication. Pedestrians facing the signal indication may start walking across the street *after* verifying that cross traffic has stopped.

While crossing, the orange "RAISED HAND" indication begins to flash. A countdown timer may optionally indicate how many seconds a pedestrian has to finishing crossing the street. A pedestrian should *not* start to leave the curb to cross the street at this stage. Pedestrians who began crossing during the white "WALKING PERSON" symbol may continue walking to the opposite side of the street (or to a safety median curb island). There will be sufficient time to complete the crossing before opposing traffic may begin moving.

Finally, the orange "RAISED HAND" indication becomes solidly illuminated. This means that a pedestrian may not enter the roadway in the direction of this indication. Depress the pedestrian push button to initiate another service call and wait for another white "WALKING PERSON" symbol to display.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is it really necessary for me to push a button to activate the pedestrian signal?

Yes. The pedestrian push button informs the traffic signal controller that you would like to cross the intersection. If the pedestrian button is not pushed, the traffic signal controller assumes no pedestrian wishes to cross and it will skip the white "WALKING PERSON" signal. You only have to push the button once to activate the white "WALKING PERSON" signal. Be safe - press the button!

The pedestrian signals assign your legal rights in the intersection; however, it is important to be always cautious when crossing ALL intersections. Look both ways even though you have the right of way, to ensure that you are entering the roadway safely.

Why doesn't the "WALKING PERSON" activate right away after I press the button?

It is important to understand that pressing the pedestrian pushbutton will not instantly preempt traffic flow. Rather, when you press the button, a service call is placed into the traffic signal controller's logic parameters to let it know a pedestrian is waiting. The signal will then cycle through the programmed phasing sequence until it reaches the appropriate (safe) phase, at which time the white "WALKING PERSON" symbol will be displayed.

The white "WALKING PERSON" symbol might appear soon after you press the button, or you may have to wait a full cycle (up to 2½ minutes). If the white "WALKING PERSON" symbol does not appear after two full cycles, then the pedestrian signal may not be working properly. You should exercise extreme caution when crossing under these circumstances. Should you experience such a scenario, please notify Public Works staff at your earliest convenience so the problem can be fixed.

Why does it always change to a flashing orange "RAISED HAND" before I have completed crossing the street?

The flashing orange "RAISED HAND" is a warning to people who have not yet left the curb to cross the intersection that it is too late to safely cross the street. Pedestrian Signals are timed to allow plenty of time for people who have already started walking to safely cross the street.

What is that noise?

Some of the intersections in the City have Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) systems installed at every corner. A steady beeping/chirping sound helps visually impaired people locate the pedestrian push button, as well as provide audible direction when and where to cross.

The following suggestions are offered in the interest of safety:

- *Cross intersections defensively.*
- *When crossing the street, regardless of the availability of signals, cross as quickly as possible. Minimize your time in the roadway.*
- *Always watch for turning vehicles. You have the legal right to be there, but that does not protect you from the carelessness of some motorists.*

The City is committed to providing the safest, most efficient and advanced Traffic Signal System available. If you have any community traffic concerns, questions, or suggestions, please call the City's Traffic Division at 949-362-4338.