

CHAPTER 4G. TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNALS AND HYBRID BEACONS FOR EMERGENCY-VEHICLE ACCESS

Section 4G.01 Application of Emergency-Vehicle Traffic Control Signals and Hybrid Beacons

Support:

01 An emergency-vehicle traffic control signal is a special traffic control signal that assigns the right-of-way to an authorized emergency vehicle.

Option:

02 An emergency-vehicle traffic control signal may be installed at a location that does not meet other traffic signal warrants such as at an intersection or other location to permit direct access from a building housing the emergency vehicle.

03 An emergency-vehicle hybrid beacon may be installed instead of an emergency-vehicle traffic control signal under conditions described in Section 4G.04.

Guidance:

04 *If a traffic control signal is not justified under the signal warrants of Chapter 4C and if gaps in traffic are not adequate to permit the timely entrance of emergency vehicles, or the stopping sight distance for vehicles approaching on the major street is insufficient for emergency vehicles, installing an emergency-vehicle traffic control signal should be considered. If one of the signal warrants of Chapter 4C is met and a traffic control signal is justified by an engineering study, and if a decision is made to install a traffic control signal, it should be installed based upon the provisions of Chapter 4D.*

05 *The sight distance determination should be based on the location of the visibility obstruction for the critical approach lane for each street or drive and the posted or statutory speed limit or 85th-percentile speed on the major street, whichever is higher.*

Section 4G.02 Design of Emergency-Vehicle Traffic Control Signals

Standard:

01 **Except as otherwise provided in this Section, an emergency-vehicle traffic control signal shall meet the requirements of this Manual.**

02 **An Emergency Vehicle (W11-8) sign (see Section 2C.49) with an EMERGENCY SIGNAL AHEAD (W11-12P) supplemental plaque shall be placed in advance of all emergency-vehicle traffic control signals. If a warning beacon is installed to supplement the W11-8 sign, the design and location of the beacon shall comply with the Standards of Sections 4L.01 and 4L.03.**

Guidance:

03 *At least one of the two required signal faces for each approach on the major street should be located over the roadway.*

04 *The following size signal indications should be used for emergency-vehicle traffic control signals: 12-inch diameter for steady red and steady yellow circular signal indications and any arrow indications, and 8-inch diameter for green or flashing yellow circular signal indications.*

Standard:

05 **An EMERGENCY SIGNAL (R10-13) sign shall be mounted adjacent to a signal face on each major street approach (see Section 2B.53). If an overhead signal face is provided, the EMERGENCY SIGNAL sign shall be mounted adjacent to the overhead signal face.**

Option:

06 An approach that only serves emergency vehicles may be provided with only one signal face consisting of one or more signal sections.

07 Besides using an 8-inch diameter signal indication, other appropriate means to reduce the flashing yellow light output may be used.

Section 4G.03 Operation of Emergency-Vehicle Traffic Control Signals

Standard:

- 01 Right-of-way for emergency vehicles at signalized locations operating in the steady (stop-and-go) mode shall be obtained as provided in Section 4D.27.**
- 02 As a minimum, the signal indications, sequence, and manner of operation of an emergency-vehicle traffic control signal installed at a midblock location shall be as follows:**
- A. The signal indication, between emergency-vehicle actuations, shall be either green or flashing yellow. If the flashing yellow signal indication is used instead of the green signal indication, it shall be displayed in the normal position of the green signal indication, while the steady red and steady yellow signal indications shall be displayed in their normal positions.**
 - B. When an emergency-vehicle actuation occurs, a steady yellow change interval followed by a steady red interval shall be displayed to traffic on the major street.**
 - C. A yellow change interval is not required following the green interval for the emergency-vehicle driveway.**
- 03 Emergency-vehicle traffic control signals located at intersections shall either be operated in the flashing mode between emergency-vehicle actuations (see Sections 4D.28 and 4D.30) or be full-actuated or semi-actuated to accommodate normal vehicular and pedestrian traffic on the streets.**
- 04 Warning beacons, if used with an emergency-vehicle traffic control signal, shall be flashed only:**
- A. For an appropriate time in advance of and during the steady yellow change interval for the major street; and**
 - B. During the steady red interval for the major street.**

Guidance:

05 *The duration of the steady red interval for traffic on the major street should be determined by on-site test-run time studies, but should not exceed 1.5 times the time required for the emergency vehicle to clear the path of conflicting vehicles.*

Option:

06 An emergency-vehicle traffic control signal sequence may be initiated manually from a local control point such as a fire station or law enforcement headquarters or from an emergency vehicle equipped for remote operation of the signal.

Section 4G.04 Emergency-Vehicle Hybrid Beacons

Standard:

01 Emergency-vehicle hybrid beacons shall be used only in conjunction with signs to warn and control traffic at an unsignalized location where emergency vehicles enter or cross a street or highway. Emergency-vehicle hybrid beacons shall be actuated only by authorized emergency or maintenance personnel.

Guidance:

- 02** *Emergency-vehicle hybrid beacons should only be used when all of the following criteria are satisfied:*
- A. The conditions justifying an emergency-vehicle traffic control signal (see Section 4G.01) are met; and*
 - B. An engineering study, considering the road width, approach speeds, and other pertinent factors, determines that emergency-vehicle hybrid beacons can be designed and located in compliance with the requirements contained in this Section and in Section 4L.01, such that they effectively warn and control traffic at the location; and*
 - C. The location is not at or within 100 feet from an intersection or driveway where the side road or driveway is controlled by a STOP or YIELD sign.*

Standard:

- 03 Except as otherwise provided in this Section, an emergency-vehicle hybrid beacon shall meet the requirements of this Manual.**
- 04 An emergency-vehicle hybrid beacon face shall consist of three signal sections, with a CIRCULAR YELLOW signal indication centered below two horizontally aligned CIRCULAR RED signal indications (see Figure 4G-1).**

05 Emergency-vehicle hybrid beacons shall be placed in a dark mode (no indications displayed) during periods between actuations.

06 Upon actuation by authorized emergency personnel, the emergency-vehicle hybrid beacon faces shall each display a flashing yellow signal indication, followed by a steady yellow change interval, prior to displaying two CIRCULAR RED signal indications in an alternating flashing array for a duration of time adequate for egress of the emergency vehicles. The alternating flashing red signal indications shall only be displayed when it is required that drivers on the major street stop and then proceed subject to the rules applicable after making a stop at a STOP sign. Upon termination of the flashing red signal indications, the emergency-vehicle hybrid beacons shall revert to a dark mode (no indications displayed) condition.

Guidance:

07 The duration of the flashing yellow interval should be determined by engineering judgment.

Standard:

08 The duration of the steady yellow change interval shall be determined using engineering practices.

Guidance:

09 The steady yellow change interval should have a minimum duration of 3 seconds and a maximum duration of 6 seconds (see Section 4D.26). The longer intervals should be reserved for use on approaches with higher speeds.

Option:

10 A steady red clearance interval may be used after the steady yellow change interval.

11 Emergency-vehicle hybrid beacons may be equipped with a light or other display visible to the operator of the egressing emergency vehicle to provide confirmation that the beacons are operating.

12 Emergency-vehicle hybrid beacons may be supplemented with an advance warning sign, which may also be supplemented with a Warning Beacon (see Section 4L.03).

Guidance:

13 If a Warning Beacon is used to supplement the advance warning sign, it should be programmed to flash only when the emergency-vehicle hybrid beacon is not in the dark mode.

Standard:

14 At least two emergency-vehicle hybrid beacon faces shall be installed for each approach of the major street and a stop line shall be installed for each approach of the major street.

Guidance:

15 On approaches having posted or statutory speed limits or 85th-percentile speeds in excess of 40 mph, and on approaches having traffic or operating conditions that would tend to obscure visibility of roadside beacon faces, both of the minimum of two emergency-vehicle hybrid beacon faces should be installed over the roadway.

16 On multi-lane approaches having posted or statutory speed limits or 85th-percentile speeds of 40 mph or less, either an emergency-vehicle hybrid beacon face should be installed on each side of the approach (if a median of sufficient width exists) or at least one of the emergency-vehicle hybrid beacon faces should be installed over the roadway.

17 An emergency-vehicle hybrid beacon should comply with the signal face location provisions described in Sections 4D.11 through 4D.16.

Standard:

18 Stop lines and EMERGENCY SIGNAL—STOP WHEN FLASHING RED (R10-14 or R10-14a) signs (see Section 2B.53 Figure 2B-27) shall be used with emergency-vehicle hybrid beacons.

Option:

19 If needed for extra emphasis, a STOP HERE ON FLASHING RED (R10-14b) sign (see Section 2B.53) may be installed with an emergency-vehicle hybrid beacon.

Figure 4G-1. Sequence for an Emergency-Vehicle Hybrid Beacon

