

NEWS RELEASE

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

George N. Campbell, Commissioner

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FLASHING YELLOW ARROW INTRODUCED TO TRAFFIC SIGNALS IN NH
AIM IS ADDED SAFETY/IMPROVED CAPACITY FOR LEFT-TURNS AT INTERSECTIONS

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation has joined other states in being among the first in the country to implement a new flashing yellow arrow left-turn signal light at intersections.

The flashing yellow arrow directs motorists to turn left after yielding to oncoming traffic, which has a green light. Currently a green circle conveys this message, typically with a corresponding sign that indicates "Left Turn Yield on Green Circle."

The flashing yellow arrow is in response to longstanding concerns by traffic engineers that motorists have falsely assumed that a permissive green signal implies they have the right-of-way over opposing traffic.

"This is the first new traffic display for traffic signals in decades and is being introduced to address an age-old problem of motorists understanding permitted left turn movements," says NHDOT Traffic Bureau Administrator Bill Lambert. "Until now left turning motorists have either seen a green left arrow or a green left circle allowing them to proceed if the turn was clear of oncoming traffic."

A national study found that drivers made fewer mistakes with the new flashing yellow arrow signals than with traditional green ball signals. The new signals also give traffic engineers more options to handle traffic volumes. According to a Memorandum issued by the Federal Highway Administration allowing the interim use of flashing left arrows, motorists "intuitively knew what the flashing yellow arrow meant" and "responded strongly and favorably to the concept with little or no public information."

The first installation of the flashing left arrow on a traffic signal in New Hampshire is northbound on NH Route 3A in Bow at the intersection of Hall Street and Interstate 89, also known as Bow Junction. Initial observations indicate that motorists are pausing more than previously when they just saw a green circle.

- XX -