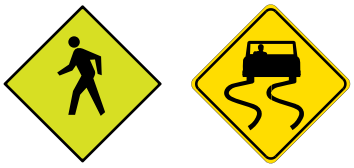
CHAPTER SIX | TRAFFIC SIGNS AND SIGNALS

Traffic signs control traffic flow, making streets and highways safe for drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians. These signs, which are posted by the Indiana Department of Transportation and local governments, use colors, shapes, written messages, and symbols to help drivers quickly understand the information. Understanding these signs is necessary to obtain an Indiana driver's license.

TRAFFIC SIGN COLORS

The background color of a traffic sign helps to identify the type of information displayed on the sign. There are seven colors commonly used for signs.

Red Traffic Signs
Red traffic signs convey traffic regulations that require drivers to take immediate action to avoid threats to traffic safety. A "Wrong Way" sign is an example of a traffic sign with a red background.



Yellow or Fluorescent Yellow-Green Traffic Signs
Yellow or fluorescent yellow-green signs prepare drivers for specific road conditions and hazards ahead, and alert drivers to nearby school zones. A "Slippery When Wet" sign is one example of a traffic sign with a yellow background. Fluorescent yellow-green signs warn drivers of nearby schools, pedestrians, bicycles, playgrounds, and school bus routes. A "Pedestrian Crossing" sign for a school crossing is an example of a traffic sign that may have a fluorescent yellow-green background.

White Traffic Signs
White Traffic signs display traffic regulations, such as speed limits, that drivers must obey, as well as helpful information such as state highway markers. A "No Turn On Red" sign is an example of a traffic sign with a white background.

Orange Traffic Signs
Orange traffic signs warn drivers of temporary traffic conditions. These signs are often used to warn drivers of conditions ahead due to highway constructions and maintenance projects. A "Flagger Ahead" sign is an example of a traffic sign with an orange background.

Green Traffic Signs
Green traffic signs indicate permitted movements and directions or guidance, such as highway entrances and exits or distance to upcoming destinations. A sign showing distance is an example of a traffic sign with a green background.

Blue Traffic Signs
Blue traffic signs display road services and evacuation route information. A sign showing information about amenities at an upcoming exit is an example of a traffic sign with a blue background.

Brown Traffic Signs
Brown traffic signs indicate nearby recreational and cultural interest sites. A sign showing a nearby state park is an example of a traffic sign with a brown background.

TRAFFIC SIGN SHAPES

The shape of a traffic sign also indicates the type of information displayed on the sign. There are seven common shapes used for traffic signs.

Circular Traffic Signs

Circular traffic signs alert drivers to upcoming railroad crossings.

Equilateral Traffic Signs

Traffic signs with three sides of equal length warn drivers to slow down when approaching an intersection, and to be prepared to come to a complete stop in order to yield to other drivers or pedestrians.

Pennant-Shaped Traffic Signs

Pennant-shaped traffic signs are posted on the left-hand side of two-way roads to warn drivers not to pass other vehicles on the left.

Rectangular Traffic Signs

Rectangular traffic signs display one of three types of information. They may convey traffic regulations that drivers must obey, such as speed limits and turn movement prohibitions like "No Left Turn."

They may provide helpful information such as route marker signs that identify a state highway, or destination signs that give the direction to the next town.

They may also warn drivers of hazardous conditions such as an advisory speed for a sharp curve in the roadway.

This advisory speed sign is often posted with a diamond- shaped warning sign.

Diamond-Shaped Traffic Signs

Diamond-shaped traffic signs warn drivers of upcoming road conditions and hazards. A "Divided Highway Ends" sign is an example of a diamond-shaped traffic sign.

Five-Sided Traffic Signs

Five-sided traffic signs warn drivers that they are entering an area near a school in which children may be crossing the road.

Eight-Sided Traffic Signs

Eight-sided traffic signs warn drivers that they must stop and yield the appropriate right of way at an intersection.

Warning Signs

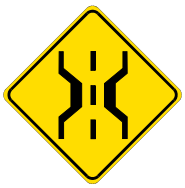
Warning signs prepare drivers for upcoming road conditions and hazards. The following signs are examples of Indiana's warning traffic signs:

Added Lane

Bicycle Crossing

Buggy Warning

Cattle Crossing


Narrow Bridge

Object Markers

Intersection Ahead

Curve Ahead

Deer Crossing

Detour In 1,000 Feet

Prepare To Stop

Sharp Turn Slow Down

Divided Highway Begins

Farm Machinery

Fire Station

Lane Ends

Steep Downgrade

Stop Ahead

Lanes Shifting

Low Clearance

Low Shoulder

Merging Traffic

Two-Way Traffic

Winding Road

Pedestrian Crossing

Playground Warning

Side Road

Slippery When Wet

"T" Intersection

Traffic Signal

Watch For Ice On Bridges

Yield Ahead

Highway Construction and Maintenance Signs

Construction zones pose dangers both for drivers and for construction workers. Orange highway construction traffic signs warn drivers to be careful when approaching construction zones.

Detour

Detour Ahead

Worksite Added Penalties

Flagger Ahead

Flagger Ahead

Right Lane Closed

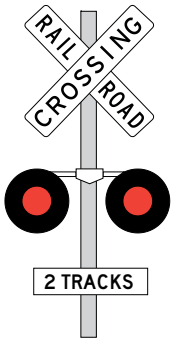
Road Work Ahead

Work Crew Ahead

Railroad Signs

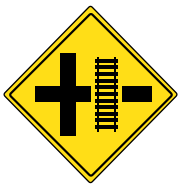
Railroad traffic signs alert drivers to upcoming railroad crossings.

Railroad Crossing



Railroad Crossing

Railroad Crossing



Railroad Crossing

School Zone Signs

Yellow or fluorescent yellow-green signs warn drivers that they are entering an area near a school in which children may be crossing the road.

School Crossing

School Crossing

School Bus Stop Ahead

School Bus Stop Ahead

Slow-Moving Vehicle Emblem

A slow-moving vehicle emblem has an orange fluorescent center and red reflective borders, and indicates a slow-moving vehicle which cannot exceed 25 miles per hour.

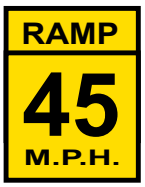
Slow Moving Vehicle

Speed Advisory Signs

Speed advisory signs may accompany some warning signs.

Speed Advisory At Exit

Speed Advisory At Roundabout



Speed Advisory On Ramp

Speed Limit Ahead

TRAFFIC REGULATION SIGNS

Traffic regulation signs regulate traffic speed as well as movement and display rules which drivers must obey. The following signs are examples of Indiana's traffic regulation signs:

Do Not Block Intersection

Do Not Enter

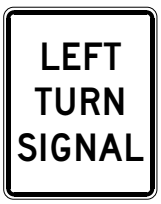
Do Not Pass

Emergency Stopping

Keep Right

Left Lane Must Turn Left

Left On Green Arrow Only



Left Turn Signal

Left Turn Yield on Green

Limited Parking

Minimum Speed

Multiple Turns

No Left Turn

No Parking

No Parking Any Time

No Right Turn

No Trucks

No Turn On Red

No U-Turn

One Way

One Way

Pay Parking

Reserved Parking

Reserved Parking Van Accesible

Restricted Lane

Right Lane Must Turn Right

Right Lane Only

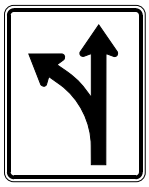
Slower Traffic Keep Right

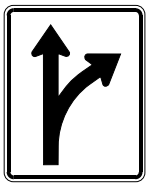
Speed Zone Ahead

Stop

Stop Here On Red

Tow-Away Zone


Turn Left Or Go Through


Turn Right Or Go Through

Two-Way Left Turn

Wrong Way

Yield

Supplemental Plaques

Supplemental plaques are sometimes added to the bottom of stop signs to indicate directions in which the intersection must stop.

4-Way

All Way

TRAFFIC GUIDANCE SIGNS

Traffic guidance signs provide drivers with information about the type of road they are traveling on, upcoming highway entrances and exits, and distances to various destinations. The following signs are examples of Indiana's traffic guidance signs:

Airport

Bus Station

Posted Distances

Highway Exits

Interstate

Mileage Indicator

State Road

US Highway

Driver Services and Recreation Signs

Driver services and recreation signs provide drivers with information about nearby amenities, parks and recreational areas.

Accommodations Available

Amenities Available

Bike Trail

Boat Ramp

Camping Site

Food Services Available

Fuel Services Available

Handicap Parking

Handicap Parking

Historical Marker

Hospital

Playground

Rest Area

Road / Weather Information

State Park

Telephone Available

TRAFFIC SIGNALS

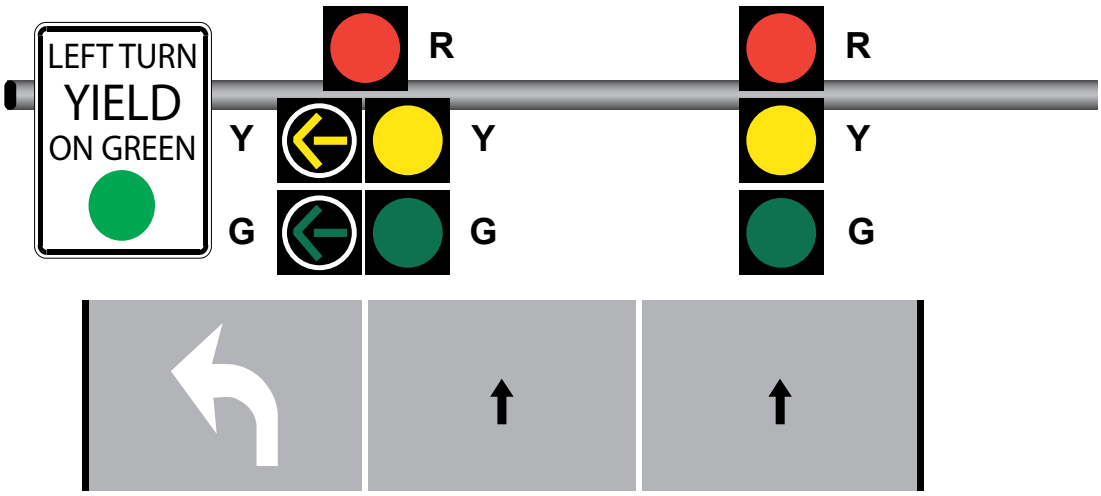
Traffic control devices such as stop lights and signs are used to control traffic flow and indicate right of way at intersections and pedestrian crossings.

Driving through an Intersection

A green light means go. If you are facing a green light, you have the right of way and may drive through an intersection as long as the intersection is clear of other vehicles and pedestrians.

A steady yellow light means the green light has ended and the signal is about to turn red. If you are facing a steady yellow light, your right of way is ending. If you are approaching the intersection and are too close to stop safely, you may complete your movement.

A red light means stop. Traffic entering an intersection from other directions has the right of way. If you are facing a red light, you may not enter the intersection until the light facing you turns green and the intersection is clear.

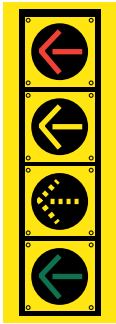


Turning through an Intersection

If you are facing a green arrow displayed with a red or green light, you have the right of way and may turn through an intersection, as long as the intersection is clear.

If you are facing a green light displayed without an arrow, you may turn through an intersection as long as the intersection is clear. You must yield the right of way to all oncoming traffic. Only one vehicle at a time may move into an intersection to turn left.

Yellow Flashing Arrows for Turning Movements



A yellow flashing arrow for a turning movement means that you may proceed with the turn only after you have yielded the right of way to pedestrians and oncoming traffic.

If you are facing a steady yellow light or arrow, your right of way is ending.

Turning through a Solid Red Light

If you are facing a red light or arrow, your right of way has ended. If you are in the middle of an intersection, you may turn once oncoming traffic has stopped. If you are facing a red light or arrow, you may not enter the intersection until the light facing you turns green and the intersection is clear.

To turn right through an intersection with a red light or arrow, when permissible, you must come to a full stop, check to make sure that there are no vehicles and pedestrians in the path of your turn or about to enter the path of your turn, check that there is not a “No Turn on Red” sign and use the correct lane.

You may turn left through an intersection with a red light or arrow if you are turning from a one-way street onto a one-way street. You must also come to a full stop, check to make sure that there are no vehicles and pedestrians in the path of your turn or about to enter the path of your turn, check that there is not a “No Turn on Red” sign, and use the correct lanes.

Yellow Flashing Lights

A yellow flashing light displayed without an arrow at an intersection means that you should slow down and use caution when traveling through an intersection. If turning left, you must yield to oncoming traffic and pedestrians. All traffic on the cross street is required to yield the right of way to you. However, you should watch for other vehicles or pedestrians attempting to cross the intersection.

Red Flashing Lights

A red flashing light at an intersection is equivalent to a stop sign and means that you must come to a complete stop before proceeding with caution to enter the intersection.

If you are facing a red flashing light at an intersection at which cross-traffic is not required to stop, you may proceed only when the intersection is clear and when you will not interfere with the right of way of cross-traffic.

If you are facing a red flashing light at an intersection at which all traffic is required to stop, you may proceed only after you have stopped and yielded the right of way to any vehicle that is already in the intersection, any vehicle that stopped before you and is entering the intersection, and any vehicle that arrived at the same time as you and is to your right.

Approaching a Red Light or Stop Sign

If you are approaching a red light or a stop sign, you must stop at the solid white stop line. If there is no stop line, you should come to a complete stop perpendicular to the stop sign or before entering the crosswalk on your side of the intersection. If there is no crosswalk, you should come to a complete stop before entering the intersection.

Often people who are operating motorcycles, motor driven cycles and bicycles get stuck at a red light and the signal fails to change to green. These individuals may avoid prolonged waits at red lights under the following condition:

- An operator approaching an intersection controlled by a traffic signal may proceed through a steady red light if the operator comes to a complete stop for at least two minutes and exercises due caution
- This rule does not apply to autocycles

Approaching a Yield Sign

A yield sign indicates that a driver must slow down when approaching an intersection and be prepared to come to a complete stop if a vehicle or pedestrian with the right of way is approaching from another direction.

If you are approaching a yield sign, a vehicle approaching from another direction with the right of way should not have to brake to avoid a collision with you.

Approaching an Intersection with Non-Operating Signal

If you are approaching an intersection with a non-operating signal, you should stop before entering the intersection. After stopping, you may proceed with caution only after you have yielded the right of way to:

- Cross-traffic that has already entered the intersection
- Any vehicle that stopped before you and is entering the intersection
- Any vehicle that arrived at the same time as you and is to your right
- Any pedestrian traffic

Approaching an Intersection with No Sign or Signal

Before entering a street from an alley or driveway, you should stop and yield the right of way to other vehicles.

Pedestrian Signals

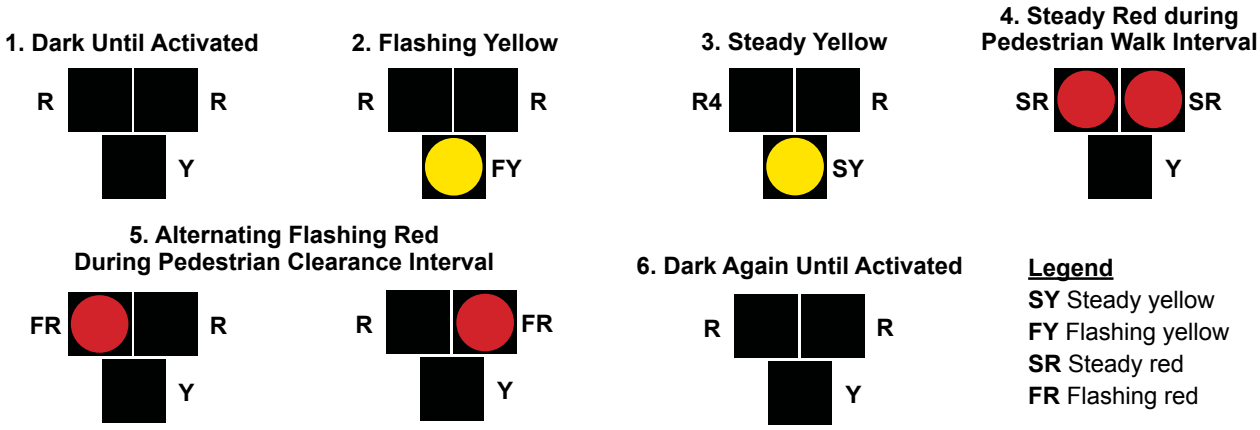
Pedestrian signals alert pedestrians when they may safely cross a street or intersection.

Pedestrian signals display the word "WALK" or a symbol of a person walking when pedestrians may safely cross a street or intersection. At some intersections, there is a button near the base of the pedestrian signal or stop sign that may be pushed to activate the walk signal.

Pedestrian signals display the words "DON'T WALK" or a symbol of a raised hand when it is not safe for pedestrians to cross a street or intersection. The words or symbols flash to alert pedestrians that the time in which to safely cross the street or intersection is ending.

Walk | Walk | Don't Walk | Don't Walk

Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons

A pedestrian hybrid beacon is a signal used to facilitate pedestrian crossing, and which may be found at a mid-block crosswalk. The pedestrian hybrid beacon is dark unless it has been activated by a pedestrian.

Once activated by a pedestrian, the pedestrian hybrid beacon will display a flashing yellow light to allow drivers to clear the crossing. The flashing yellow will be followed by a steady yellow light to warn drivers that their right of way is ending. Then, two steady red lights will be displayed while the pedestrian crosses, and then the two red lights will flash to allow drivers to proceed through if the crossing is clear of pedestrians. The pedestrian hybrid beacon will then go dark until activated again by a pedestrian.