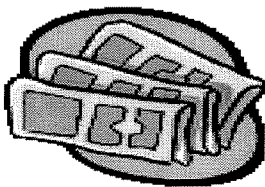


Other Traffic Information Brochures Available:



- Bicycles on Buses
- Bicycle Safety
- Crosswalks
- Parking on Residential Streets
- Speed Humps
- Speed Limits
- Speed Limit Enforcement in Our City
- Traffic Signals
- Vegetation & Traffic Safety

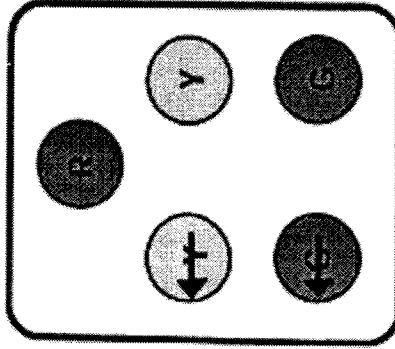
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City of Thousand Oaks
Public Works Department
2100 Thousand Oaks Boulevard
Thousand Oaks, CA 91362-2903

Left Turn Traffic Signals

What are they?

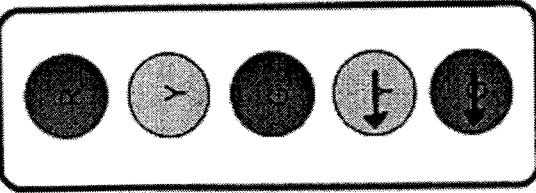


City of Thousand Oaks
Public Works Department
(805) 449-2400
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Operations of a Protected/Permissive Left Turn Signal

- **Green Arrow is Illuminated and Circular Green is Dark**

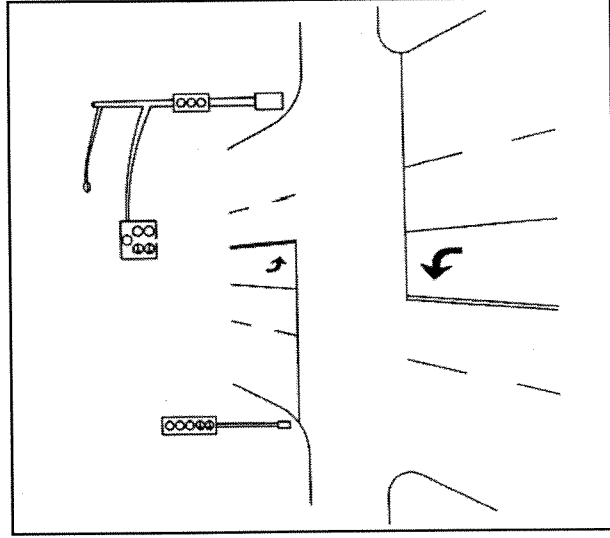


“Permissive” means that when turning left and the driver faces a circular green ball signal, the driver must yield to oncoming traffic. “Protected” means that when turning left and the driver faces a green arrow, the driver has the right of way.

What are the Benefits of Left Turn Signals?

Protected/permissive signals reduce delay. Left turn traffic can use gaps in opposing traffic more efficiently and, as a result, left turn traffic does not wait as long at the signal. Also, because the green arrow does not need to be on as long, there is less delay at intersections meaning that vehicles are stopped for shorter periods, thereby reducing travel time as well as emissions and improving air quality. Also, the signals improve traffic safety by reducing “stacking” of vehicles beyond the left turn pocket and blocking through traffic. Left turn signals are used at many protected/permissive intersections. The total cycle length of the light sequence can be lessened, reducing delay for all vehicles in all movement directions.

Studies have shown that motorists occasionally become frustrated at fully protected locations during off-peak hours and turn illegally in spite of the red arrow. This is one safety consideration related to fully protected operations. Motorists may develop disrespect for traffic control devices in general as their frustration level increases. Many motorists are likely to make up for their lost time waiting at a fully protected signal during non-peak times. This may result in speeding further down the road or shortcutting through residential neighborhoods.



To summarize, the benefits of using protected/permissive left turn signals are:

1. Saves motorists' time;
2. Improves the level of service at signalized intersections;
3. Improves air quality;
4. Saves fuel consumption;
5. Helps reduce speeding;
6. Helps reduce short-cutting.

This means that left turn traffic and through traffic proceed at the same time in the same direction. The left turn is still protected because the opposing through traffic has a red light.

- **Only the Circular Green is Illuminated**

This indicates that through traffic in both directions has the right of way. Left turn traffic may only proceed on a “permissive” basis when there are adequate gaps or breaks between vehicles coming from the opposite direction.

Basically, a driver needs to remember two things:

1. If the green arrow is on, left turns can be made while conflicting traffic must wait.
2. If only the circular green light is on, you must yield to opposing traffic.

Many collisions that have occurred at protected/permissive left turns are the result of driver error by not paying attention to the arrow and green light indications. Some drivers may believe that a “green circular ball” means a “green arrow”.