

Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon Signals

New to Omaha, Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon signals have been providing multiple benefits to other cities around the country for years. Read on to find out more about what they are, how they work, and how they help.

WHAT IS A PEDESTRIAN HYBRID BEACON SIGNAL?

A Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon signal (also known as a High intensity Activated crosswalk, or HAWK beacon) is a type of traffic signal which creates a safer and more efficient environment for pedestrians to cross busy streets. Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB) signals replace traditional “Red/Yellow/Green” pedestrian crossing signals. PHB signals are in line with Federal standards and have been around since the late 1990s; in fact, they are already in use in many cities around the country.

The first PHB signal to be installed in Omaha will be on 50th Street between “G” Street and “I” Street, where the new South Omaha trail crosses 50th Street. Trail users will be able to cross 50th Street by using the PHB signal, which will help alert drivers to their presence and provide for a safe and efficient crossing. PHB signals will continue to be considered at other locations around the City.



City of Omaha
Public Works
Department
Traffic Engineering

SAFETY BENEFITS

REDUCED CRASHES

Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB) signals have been shown to increase safety by reducing crash rates at pedestrian crossings.

FEWER VIOLATIONS

PHB signals cause a decrease in dangerous driver violations at pedestrian crossings.

DRIVER ATTENTION

With a typical “Red/Yellow/Green” pedestrian crossing signal, there can be a tendency for the signal to “blend in” to the background. However, PHB signals eliminate this concern, since they only turn on when a pedestrian wishes to cross the street.

REDUCED DELAY

PHB signals can eliminate driver delay and frustration, as they allow drivers to proceed through the crossing once it is clear of pedestrians (rather than having to wait for a green light).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

VIDEO OF OPERATION

For a video showing a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB) signal in use, [Click Here](#). Note that the PHB signal is referred to as a HAWK Crossing in the video; this is the same thing as a PHB signal.

LINKS

- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Report: [Safety Effectiveness of the PHB \(HAWK\) Pedestrian Crossing](#)
- Additional Resources from FHWA: [Proven Safety Countermeasures](#)
- Printable User's Guide from Public Works: [Click Here](#).

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For questions on Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon signals or any other traffic-related questions, please contact us.

WHAT TO DO AS A DRIVER

When approaching a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB) signal in a vehicle, the signals will be dark when not in use. However, if the yellow light begins flashing, then begin to slow down and prepare to stop. When the yellow light changes to a steady indication, stop if it is safe to do so. Once the PHB signal changes from steady yellow to two solid red indications, stop and remain stopped. When the two red lights begin an alternating flash pattern, stop or remain stopped until pedestrians have finished crossing the street. If the crosswalk is clear while the two red signals are still in the alternating flash pattern, then drivers may proceed with caution. The signal will then return to its unlit condition when not in use by pedestrians.



WHAT TO DO AS A PEDESTRIAN

As a pedestrian wishing to use a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB) signal, use the signal as you would a normal traffic signal. Push the button on the signal and watch the pedestrian signal head across the street. When it changes from a Don't Walk symbol (orange solid hand) to a Walk symbol (walking person), begin crossing the street in the crosswalk. When the Walk symbol changes to a Flashing Don't Walk with Countdown Timer, continue crossing if you are already in the crosswalk, but do not begin crossing if you have not already done so.



HOW PEDESTRIAN HYBRID BEACON SIGNALS WORK

	 DRIVERS	 PEDESTRIANS		
	Will See...	Will Do...	Will See...	Will Do...
1		Proceed with caution.		Push the button to activate the system.
2	 FLASHING	Slow down, prepare to stop. A pedestrian has activated the system.		Wait.
3		Stop if it is safe to do so.		Continue to wait.
4		STOP. A pedestrian is in the crosswalk.		Start crossing when all vehicles are stopped.
5	 FLASHING	STOP. Proceed with caution if the crosswalk is clear.		Continue crossing; the signal will count down.
6		Proceed with caution.		Push the button to activate the system.



Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB) signals use less energy than standard traffic signals, as PHB signals are unlit when they are not in use.