



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

AUG - 8 2011

1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

In Reply Refer To:
HOTO-1

Adam S. Weiser, P.E., PTOE
Safety Programs Manager
Division of Transportation Solutions
Delaware Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 778
Dover, DE 19903

Dear Mr. Weiser:

Thank you for your letter of July 28 requesting an Official Interpretation of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) regarding the use of red clearance intervals in the display sequence of a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB).

It is our Official Interpretation that:

1. A steady red clearance interval, in which the faces for the major street are steady red and the pedestrian signal faces are steady orange upraised hand, may be inserted into the sequence of a PHB between the end of the steady yellow change interval and the start of the walk interval for the pedestrian crosswalk.
2. The alternating flashing red display on the PHB faces for the major street may be extended beyond the end of the flashing orange upraised hand pedestrian change interval for a brief buffer interval before the major street faces return to a dark (non-illuminated) condition.

Our reasoning for this interpretation is as follows.

The pertinent text of the 2009 MUTCD is in Section 4F.03, which prescribes a specific required sequence of displays for a PHB. As pointed out in your letter, the text does not provide an option for a steady red clearance interval before the start of the walk interval, nor does it provide for a buffer interval at the end of the pedestrian change interval before the vehicular faces return to a dark condition. This was an inadvertent oversight that occurred in the development of the text of this Section (and in Figure 4F-3 that illustrates the sequence) and it was not intended that such added intervals be precluded.

In Section 4G.04, which covers the other type of hybrid beacon, the Emergency-Vehicle Hybrid Beacon (EVHB), the text contains an option that allows the addition of a steady red clearance

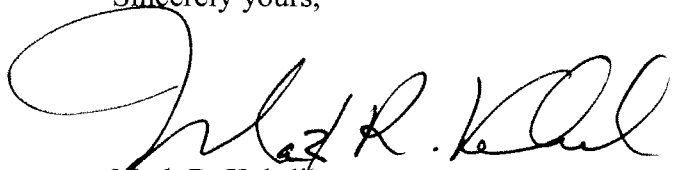
interval after the yellow change interval. Further, a brief extension of the alternating flashing red display on the PHB faces for the major street after the end of the pedestrian change interval and before the PHB faces return to a dark (non-illuminated) condition, at which time vehicular traffic can resume flowing without stopping, would be in concert with the MUTCD principles for pedestrian signal displays in general.

We believe that the extra intervals can be used to advantage at some PHB locations to provide increased safety and it was not intended that optional use of such intervals be disallowed. Accordingly, it is our Official Interpretation that the additional intervals, as described above, may be used in the sequence of a PHB. For the next edition of the MUTCD, we will consider proposing revisions to the Section 4F.03 and Figure 4F-3 to formally correct this inadvertent oversight.

Your letter also noted that Section 4F.03 and Figure 4F-3 contain four instances of the term “pedestrian clearance interval,” an undefined term. You are correct that the phrase “pedestrian change interval” should have been used in that section and figure. We have updated the “List of Known Errors in the 2009 MUTCD” to add these errors. The updated list is posted on the MUTCD Web site.

Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention. Please note that we have assigned your request the following official interpretation number and title: “4(09)-14 (I) – Red Clearance Interval in Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon Sequence.” Please refer to this number in any future correspondence regarding this issue.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark R. Kehrli". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "K".

Mark R. Kehrli
Director, Office of Transportation
Operations