



TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

FACT SHEETS

“WALK...OR DON'T WALK? THOSE SIGNS ARE SO CONFUSING!”

The operation of pedestrian signals (WALK and DON'T WALK) is often misunderstood. They are installed at signalized intersections to indicate to pedestrians when they should, or should not, walk across the street. The pedestrian indications can either be in text or symbol format. Pedestrian signals, similar to the three phases of vehicle signals (green, amber and red) also have three phases:

- The steady WALK indication means pedestrians may begin to walk across the street. During this time, drivers on the cross street face a steady red light. Pedestrians should always *Stop, Wait, Look and Listen* for vehicles turning or violating their red signal. Remember, vehicles are permitted to turn right on a red light!
- The flashing DON'T WALK indicates to pedestrians that there is sufficient time to complete walking across the street, but not enough time if they have not yet begun to cross. Vehicles on the cross street face a red light on their signal, but pedestrians should always watch for vehicles.
- The steady DON'T WALK indicates that pedestrians should not be in the process of crossing the street because drivers will be traveling across the crosswalk.

The total time of both the steady WALK and flashing DON'T WALK indications provide sufficient time for pedestrians to cross the street. Pedestrians should **always** watch for vehicles.

When crossing a boulevard street (a street with an island in the center) there may be a pedestrian signal on the island. Always adhere to this pedestrian signal. It indicates when to cross, but only to the island. You may have to wait for the next signal cycle to cross beyond the island.

Pedestrians should not watch the three-color (green, amber and red) signal when there is a pedestrian signal at the crossing. It can be confusing and dangerous!

Some intersections with pedestrian signals have a special button for pedestrians to push. When pushed, this button changes the timing of the signals at the intersection. It must be pushed for the signal to provide sufficient time to cross the street. Don't expect the WALK signal to come on immediately. The signal timing will change at the beginning of the next signal cycle. Wait for the steady WALK indication before beginning to cross the street.