

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons Update VERSION 3

2/2/2018

FHWA has rescinded interim approval of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) effective December 21, 2017 for all new installations of RRFB devices. Several patents had been issued for the RRFB devices and the MUTCD and MN MUTCD prohibits using patented devices. More information is available here under "Terminated Interim Approvals Issued Under 2003 MUTCD":

https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/res-interim_approvals.htm#term2003

Impacts

RRFB devices have been installed in many locations in Minnesota. Those that have already been installed may remain in place for the rest of their useful life. RRFB devices are no longer MN MUTCD compliant for new construction projects that do not have documentation of RRFBs with procurements issued and/or construction plans underway prior to FHWA's December 21, 2017 notice. Projects that have documentation of RRFBs with procurements issued and/or construction plans underway prior to FHWA's December 21, 2017, notice are allowed to proceed.

Mitigation Strategies

- If an RRFB has already been installed and is operating, continue to use it and replace it at the end of its useful life with a MN MUTCD compliant device.
- If a construction project has documentation of RRFBs with procurements issued and/or construction plans underway prior to December 21, 2017 the RRFBs in their contract may be installed.
- Projects that are in design or do not have documentation of RRFBs with procurements issued and/or construction plans underway prior to December 21, 2017 should replace RRFB devices with MN MUTCD compliant pedestrian-activated beacons and signage (see below). Although the rates of vehicles yielding to pedestrians are lower (15 to 20% vs. 78 to 100%), these are the best available alternative to the RRFB devices.



Long-range planning for people crossing the street should consider the geometric, beacon, lighting, signing, striping, and signal Pedestrian Safety Strategies that best fit your location from [Minnesota's Best Practices for Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety](#). General guidance for installation of traffic control devices at unsignalized crossings is still available in Chapter 13 of the [Traffic Engineering Manual](#) (TEM). However caution should be used when using Figure 10 and Table 13-1. The TEM will be updated to reflect the rescindment of RRFBs, in the meantime use engineering judgment or contact the State Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Engineer (contact information below).

Creativity and new ideas are needed for the safety of people crossing the street. The Request to Experiment process is laid out in [1.A.10.2 of the MN MUTCD](#).

FAQ

Click here for Frequently Asked Questions on the FHWA MUTCD website:

https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/resources/interim_approval/ia11/faq/index.htm

FHWA has also released an informational brief on options still available at this website:

https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/resources/interim_approval/ia11/informationalbrief/index.htm