

Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacons in Maine

A Simple Approach to Promote this Safety Countermeasure

Sponsoring Agency: Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT)

Plan Date: 2017 and on-going

Summary

Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) is one of MaineDOT's most common pedestrian countermeasures. In addition to installing RRFBs through their typical project development process, the Department has reached out to communities to become partners in the installation and maintenance of the RRFB. MaineDOT created a single procurement-only contract for RRFBs where municipalities pay for installation outside the Federal contract, which allows MaineDOT to support the countermeasure and avoid the duplicative process associated with multiple Federal contracts.

Highlights

MaineDOT's Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) involves the identification, analysis, and prioritization of problem safety areas and projects in alignment with the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). Pedestrians and bicyclists are focus areas in the SHSP. MaineDOT requires that projects: be site specific or systemic, consistent with the SHSP, correct or improve a hazardous road location, and/or address a highway safety problem.

There are three ways an RRFB can be installed at a location in accordance with MaineDOT's Crosswalk Policy as a part of the HSIP RRFB project.

1. Municipality participates in a crosswalks and sidewalks training course.
2. MaineDOT receives a specific request to install RRFB at an unsafe location and conducts a site review.
3. MaineDOT Pedestrian Forums, held by a team of experts in cities and towns across the State with high numbers of pedestrian crashes, identify an unsafe location and determine if an RRFB is an appropriate countermeasure.

To encourage local agencies to be involved in the process, MaineDOT contracts exclusively for RRFBs for procurement. There is no construction phase included in the contract. RRFBs are installed outside the Federal contract with local forces using local funds. Communities are responsible for maintaining the RRFBs and a list of locations is kept by MaineDOT in accordance with the MUTCD Interim Approval (IA-21)¹.

Activated Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacon



Image Source: Toole Design

¹ In March of 2018, FHWA announced that a RRFB patent dispute had been settled, allowing its production by all manufacturers. This led the Federal Highway Administration to issue Interim Approval (IA-21). All agencies must submit or resubmit requests to FHWA to use the RRFB following the standard interim approval process.