

Maintenance Innovation State of the Practice

Maintenance Innovation: Lighted Flagging Paddles and Lighted Batons

Description: These hand-signaling devices are used for traffic control. The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) allows STOP/SLOW paddles to be modified to “improve the conspicuity by incorporating either white or red flashing lights on the STOP face, and either white or yellow flashing lights on the SLOW face.” The MUTCD describes permissible flashing patterns.



(Source: Visual Workplace, Inc.)

Requester Name/Agency: Bill Gombotz, Connecticut Department of Transportation

Date of Request: February 15, 2024

Query: How are members using lighted flagging paddles and/or lighted batons for nighttime traffic control?

Summary of Responses:

Table 1. Lighted Flagging Paddles

State	Application or Practice	Issues	Other Comments
California	Allowed; practice not specified	Paddles are not sturdy enough for maintenance crews.	None
Maine	Used exclusively for daytime and nighttime operations	Paddles can be fragile and pricey.	Paddles have flashing lights on them or a ring of lights around the edges.
Maryland, New York, Utah	Allowed but not used	None noted	None
Michigan	Allowed for directing traffic	Paddles are delicate and lights require extra caution.	Not known if paddles are in use; see References below for an excerpt from Michigan’s MUTCD.
Virginia	Used in tunnels; available for other uses	Paddles are a “bit flimsier” and not as widely accepted for uses other than tunnels.	Lighting provides more visibility when stopping high-speed traffic.

Table 2. Lighted Batons

State	Application or Practice
California, Ohio	Not allowed
Maine, Maryland, Utah	Allowed but not used
Michigan	Allowed for directing traffic; not known if batons are in use
New York	Not routinely used but appropriate in some instances

Other Practices

In Maryland, Ohio and Texas, the entire flagging area or station must be illuminated.

References

Chapter 6E, Flagger Control, [Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices](#), Federal Highway Administration, last modified November 2023.

Part 6, Temporary Traffic Control, [Michigan Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices](#) (see page 31 of the PDF), Michigan Department of Transportation, 2017.