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## ABOUT THE COVER:

Rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) are effective crosswalk safety devices, but they were almost lost due to patent issues. Manufacturer Carmanah Technologies purchased and disclaimed the patents, enabling a new FHWA interim approval on March 21. Read the FHWA announcement on page 8.

## ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS:

If you would like to submit an article for publication in the *IMSA Journal* you may do so by sending it to [Journal@IMSAsafety.org](mailto:Journal@IMSAsafety.org). Articles should include a photograph of the author and a brief bio. All accompanying artwork should be 300 dpi files. Files downloaded from a web site will not be high enough resolution to reproduce well. Low resolution artwork may not be used with your article in the *Journal*.



# PRODUCT SPOTLIGHTS — CONTINUED

## CARMANAH PURCHASES AND DISCLAIMS RRFB PATENTS, PROPELLING THE TECHNOLOGY INTO THE OPEN MARKET.



In March 2018, Carmanah Technologies purchased and disclaimed all patents restricting rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) from gaining federal approvals in the US. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) had previously revoked the interim approval due to the patent disputes, but immediately following Carmanah's actions, reversed its decision and reinstated the RRFB as an approved option. The FHWA released Interim Approval 21 – Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacons at Crosswalks, which describes the new requirements for states and local agencies to install RRFBs.

Extensive studies on the RRFB have shown it produces driver yield rates of 96%, on par with more costly solutions and far higher than crosswalk paint alone. As a result of the RRFB's effectiveness as a tool preventing pedestrian injury or death, the FHWA granted the Interim Approval for Optional Use of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (IA-11) in its Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) in 2008. Many states and agencies followed suit, adding the RRFB to their own approved or qualified products lists. Later, the original manufacturer of the RRFB sought and received several patents on the RRFB design, but since the FHWA prohibits proprietary devices in the MUTCD, it withdrew IA-11 on December 21, 2017.

Carmanah purchased all patents with the sole purpose of disclaiming them, a move that propels the RRFB into the public domain. With the patent issue resolved and IA-21 in effect, the market is open for anyone; all current and future manufacturers can produce RRFBs without licensing fees or fear of patent infringement.

Carmanah aims to continue advancing RRFB technology with the goal of increasing roadway safety as more RRFBs are deployed in crosswalks throughout the US and worldwide.

"The ability to use RRFBs will undoubtedly help reduce pedestrian and bicycle injuries and deaths. We hope that the RRFB interim approval may one day become a full inclusion in the

MUTCD," said John Simmons, CEO of Carmanah, manufacturer of LED flashing beacons. Since 1996, Carmanah has delivered durable, dependable, efficient, and cost-effective solutions for a variety of industrial applications that perform in some of the world's harshest environments.

"Our vision is to be the global leader in the signals industry, and one of the traits of a good leader is knowing when to take a stand for the benefit of all. We believe in improving safety, and we believe in this product: we could not stand by and do nothing when technology with the proven ability to save lives is at risk of being stifled," Simmons said. "We believe manufacturers should not compete on intellectual property; technology should be in the public domain so we can all compete on the merits of our ideas and quality of manufacturing."

Carmanah's team can help state and local agencies with the approval process, perform site assessments, and answer any questions about IA-21 and the RRFB. Contact them toll-free in the US & Canada at 1.844.412.8395 or at [traffic@carmanah.com](mailto:traffic@carmanah.com).

*Edmonds, WA RRFB at roundabout.  
Image Courtesy of Carmanah Technologies.*

