

Intersection Preemption Devices

During the last few years, most of the traffic signals at intersections within the Village of Oswego have been converted to employ the use of traffic preemption devices. These intersections are usually easy to identify by the presence of a receiver and a visual signal device or clear flood light for each directional approach to the intersection. The purpose of the preemption device is to provide a green light or right-of-way to emergency vehicles traveling towards the intersection. All emergency vehicles equipped with an emitter will activate the preemption device.

There are a few guidelines to be aware of when approaching an activated preemption device. In addition to complying with the normal traffic laws regarding traffic signals, if you encounter an activated preemption device, use extreme caution knowing emergency vehicles are approaching the intersection.

A solid floodlight indicates an emergency vehicle is approaching the intersection from a different direction, either towards you or from either side. If your traffic signal is green, it will change to yellow and then red in a few seconds. Do not try to beat the red light. If you have not entered the intersection and if conditions allow, pull over safely to the right side of the roadway and wait for the floodlight to turn off. Traffic signals will then begin their normal cycle. Whether you have passed through the intersection or pulled along the roadside, be aware one or more emergency vehicles may be enroute to the emergency call. Be prepared to remain stopped until all emergency responding vehicles have safely passed through the intersection, the floodlight has turned off, and the traffic signals have returned to their normal cycle.

A flashing floodlight indicates an emergency vehicle is approaching the intersection from the same direction you are traveling. The emergency vehicle may be in front or behind you, and as noted earlier, there may be more than one emergency vehicle. If the traffic signal facing you is red, it will change to green shortly. If you have not entered the intersection and it is safe to do so, drive safely to the right side of the roadway and wait for the floodlights to turn off. If you are in heavy traffic and had been waiting at a red light before it was activated by the preemption device, pull as far forward up to or through the intersection as necessary to be able to safely pull to the right side of the roadway to allow room for emergency vehicles to pass through. Remain pulled over until all responding emergency vehicles have safely passed through the intersection, the floodlight has stopped flashing, and the traffic signals have returned to their normal cycle.

Due to the cost of the preemption devices, there are a few intersections within the Village of Oswego which do not currently employ the use of the systems. Additionally, not all emergency vehicles are equipped with an emitter to activate the preemption device. Therefore, to ensure your safety and the safety of emergency responders, it is important to continue following the normal traffic laws regarding the adherence to all emergency vehicles.

Traffic Sergeant Dan Kipper