

# Maintenance Memorandum

**Date:** December 11, 2002

**Subject: Dark Signals**

This memo is to clarify a December 12, 2001, memorandum regarding dark signals.

**A dark signal is a signal that is not lit based on a local area power outage.**

Current maintenance guidelines, last revised in 1993, state... "An investigation determining that a general power failure is the cause of a problem requires no further action. Placement of portable generators as a temporary power source should not be undertaken. Possible damage to signal equipment may occur. Temporary STOP signs may be placed at the intersection and the controller switched to flash operation. After power is restored, the intersection should be switched back to normal operation." We believe this is still the best alternative and will provide the greatest safety benefit for the motorist during a power outage.

Please remember when STOP signs are placed on any leg of an intersection, that the signal controller on that leg **MUST** be switched to the "red" flash operation. This is to avoid confusion and liability when the power to the signal comes back on, and the signal is in the stop and go mode, with a STOP sign at a leg of the intersection. We do not want the driver facing a green or yellow signal indication and a STOP sign, and not know which to follow. If it cannot be ensured that the signal will come back in the appropriate flash mode in conjunction with the temporary traffic control, **DO NOT** place STOP signs at that intersection. When any STOP signs placed are removed, remember to switch the controller to the stop and go mode of operation.

If you have any questions on this decision, please contact Paula Corlett at 517-373-1224.

Larry E. Tibbits  
Chief Operations Officer  
(Signature on file)