



23 February 2010

New Lane Control Signs - SH1 in Wellington

Q: What and where are Lane Control Signs?

A: Lane Control Signs are electronic signs housed on gantries over motorway lanes on SH1 in Wellington from south of the Terrace Tunnel to Ngauranga. The signs will be in use from early March 2010 and they will display speeds and symbols to provide information to motorists about motorway conditions.

Q: What do the symbols mean?

A: The symbols include green arrows and red crosses to show which lanes are open, and which are closed or closing, and revised speed limits. Lanes may be reopening following an incident, for example, or closing to enable emergency services to reach crash sites quickly and safely.

Q: Why is this new technology being introduced?

A: The NZ Transport Agency is introducing this new technology to improve safety, traffic flow and provide accurate, quality information to motorists where they need it most. It is contained in the Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy 2007-2016.

Q: What else is happening?

A: The signs are part of an existing Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS) system in Wellington to improve traffic flow. ATMS includes a fibre optic network and approximately 75 cameras monitoring conditions on the region's motorways, as well as Variable Message Signs (VMS); electronic signs displaying short strands of text to inform and advise drivers about incidents, queues, traffic and weather conditions. Several new VMS are being rolled out at the same time as the new lane control signs.

Q: How do they work?

A: Motorway conditions are monitored through cameras watched live by a team of traffic experts, as well as via electronic loops underneath the road, and radar devices that measure traffic flows and volumes. This data, plus information from the police and telephone calls from the public, enables the signs to be adjusted to maximise flow and manage incidents.

Q: When will the signs operate?

A: Available 24/7, the signs will only be turned on when they are required – if no symbol or speed is displayed normal road rules apply. Orange flashing lights on the corners of the signs alert motorists to the message and information being displayed.

Q: Do I need to obey the signs?

A: It is mandatory for motorists to follow these legally enforceable signs for their safety and the safety of other road users.

Q: What are the benefits of Lane Control Signs?

A: Improved safety and traffic flow are the main benefits of the system. Providing good information to motorists in their vehicles helps to avoid crashes, and quickly and safely clears those that do occur. Additional benefits include greater vehicle throughput, reduced travel times, energy consumption and pollutants. The signs enable speed limits to be quickly adjusted to suit conditions, and camera coverage means motorway managers can see what is happening and where, and make appropriate decisions.

Q: What information can I get from the signs?

A: Information provided via the signs and VMS includes details about:

- bad weather and poor visibility
- alternative routes to avoid delays
- the location and length of queues
- presence of crash sites, spills or other incidents

Q: Are lane control signs being used anywhere else?

A: Lane control signs are already being used successfully in Auckland and overseas

Q: Why are the new signs mounted on gantries and overbridges?

A: Placement was chosen on the basis of best visibility for drivers and to comply with the speed limit rules. These require signs to be repeated at regular intervals.