



ROADS AUTHORITIES & UTILITIES COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND)

ADVICE NOTE 8

PORTABLE TRAFFIC SIGNALS

Version 2.1

10 July 2025

Version History

Version	Date	Notes
1.00	March 2005	Approved by RAUC(S)
1.10	December 2003	Approved by SCOTS 23 Sep 05 for Road Authority work excluding Trunk Roads
1.20	December 2006	At RAUC(S) 7 Jun 06, accepted for Trunk Roads by Transport Scotland. Minor changes to text.
2.0	May 2021	New flow chart Removal for road authorities to supply drawings Clarification on site specific approval Addition of Pedestrian phased lights Addition of Risk Assessment Updated text to plain English
2.1	July 2025	Removal of the reference to the 'Pink Book' Update the language around SRWR applications Clarity on manual control Ratified by RAUC(S) on 1 July 2025 Minor correction to flowchart 10 July 2025

1 Introduction

This procedure covers the notification, approval and use of portable traffic signals on Public Roads in Scotland. A diagrammatic representation of the procedure is indicated on the flow chart below. The use of the Scottish Road Works Register (SRWR) for Portable Traffic Signals permit applications is considered to bring benefits in terms of both efficiency and consistency. Therefore, road authorities should adopt this as the primary means of receiving and processing applications unless they have good reason to do otherwise.

Portable traffic signals are often referred to as portable light signals, temporary traffic signals or temporary traffic lights. The terminology used in Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSR&GD) has been used throughout.

Where pedestrian only phased lights are proposed, permission must be sought in the same manner.

2 Background

TSR&GD states that portable traffic signals may be placed for the control of vehicular traffic only if permission is given formally by the road authority, or verbally in an urgent situation which must be followed by the appropriate formal conformation as soon as reasonably practicable. Roads Authorities can make conditions on such permissions, but these should be proportionate and appropriate.

Manual control of portable traffic signals should only be made a condition of the permission on a case-by-case basis and for as short a duration as possible.

Examples where manual control may be appropriate are where works are interacting with existing traffic control or where tidal traffic flows would cause unacceptable delays.

The use of manual traffic control should be carefully monitored to ensure that it is as efficient and effective as possible, particularly in the preliminary stages of works.

Innovative technologies such as Artificial Intelligence / Adaptive Detection System can be used to reduce the need for manual control.

The use of innovative technologies to improve safety and traffic flows is encouraged

Site specific approval to the placing of signals is required except for:

- a) Where the signals are being operated and maintained by and under the regular supervision of a uniformed constable during the progress of a temporary scheme of traffic control, or
- b) On a length of road along which there is no junction carrying vehicular traffic to and from it; and the width of the carriageway is temporarily restricted to carry one line of traffic, or
- c) At a level crossing when work in relation to that crossing is being carried out, or
- d) On a road adjacent to the temporary site of road, building or engineering works used for the movement of vehicles, materials, plant, or equipment within the site of the works (for example where the signals control access and egress to the works.)

“Safety at Street Works and Road Works, A Code of Practice” is the statutory code that covers traffic control by portable traffic signals (page 62 onwards).

3 Procedure

All sites that require the use of portable traffic signals require permission from the relevant road authority. All applications should include the site-specific risk assessment.

Detailed plans may be requested for 2-way signals by a road authority if they deem the site requires it, this should only be requested in exceptional circumstances. This does not result in the site requiring specific approval and would not be chargeable as per Advice Note 4.

It may be necessary to arrange a joint site meeting prior to approval for more complex sites.

Where site specific approval is required, a traffic management plan must accompany the application and should be of a high standard of 1:1250 or 1:2500 scale indicating the work area and the traffic control arrangements. In these cases, advice can be obtained from the appropriate road authority.

Fees for the processing of applications for specific site approval shall be as set out in the RAUC(S) Advice Note 4 - Inspections, Defects and Other Charges and should be reasonable. No fee shall be charged for sites exempted from specific approval.

Form PLS-A is an application form which is used by the applicant to:

- a) Request permission from the road authority for the use of "2 way" portable traffic signals and to request confirmation that specific site approval is not required, or to
- b) Request approval from the road authority for the use of more complex sets of portable traffic signals.

Form PLS-A: States the conditions to be met by the applicant in utilising portable traffic signals.

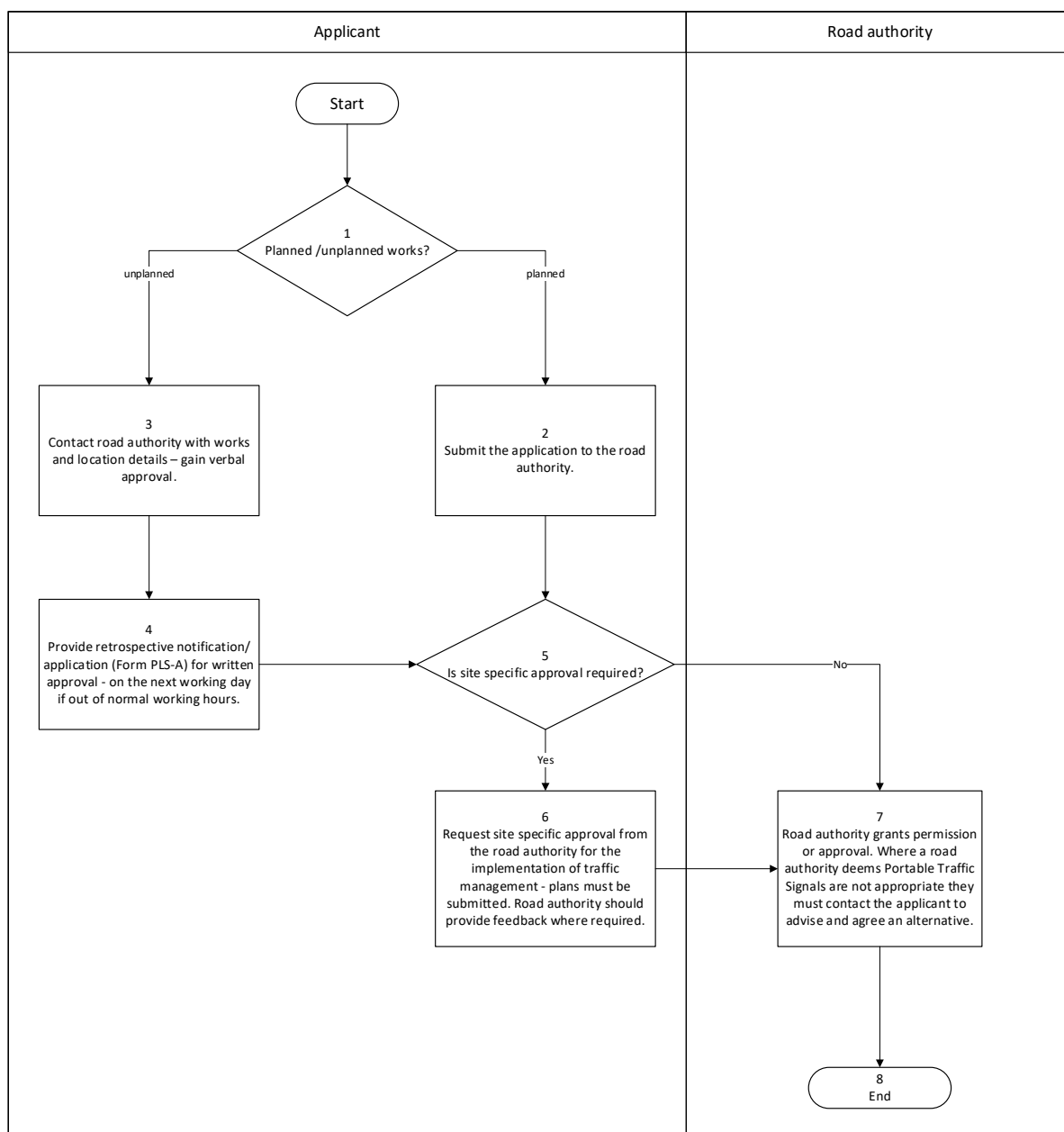
Form PLS-B: Can be used by the road authority to provide written permission for the use of portable traffic signals to the applicant.

Form PLS-C: Can be used by the road authority to record applications for and notifications of the use of portable traffic signals.

Where emergency or urgent works require portable traffic signals to be set up outwith office hours then the applicant shall:

- 1) Obtain verbal approval from the appropriate road authority Out of Hours contact.
- 2) Provide to the road authority Out of Hours contact:
 - a) Site specific details of the works location,
 - b) Nature of the works,
 - c) Portable traffic signal layout, and
 - d) Contact details (24-hour phone numbers) of the applicant, the company carrying out the works and the traffic management company where applicable.

Appendix A. Procedure Chart



Detailed steps

The works require portable traffic signals – permission or a permit is required.

Step	Action	Action By
1	Planned or unplanned works? If planned go to 2 If unplanned go to 3	Applicant
2	Submit the application to the road authority – at least 7 working days in advance of the planned start date. This should be completed via the SRWR where the applicant has access. Go to 5	Applicant
3	Contact road authority with works and location details – gain verbal approval. Go to 4	Applicant
4	Provide retrospective notification/ application (Form PLS-A) for written approval - on the next working day if out of normal working hours. Go to 5	Applicant
5	Is site specific approval required? If yes go to 6 If no go to 7	Applicant
6	Request site specific approval from the road authority for the implementation of traffic management, submitting scaled traffic management drawings. The road authority reserves the right to decline permission or request further clarification based on the suitability of the information submitted. This will be retrospective for urgent / emergency works.	Applicant

Step	Action	Action By
7	Road authority grants permission or approval. Where a road authority deems TTL's are not appropriate they must contact the applicant to advise and agree an alternative.	Road authority
8	End of process	N/A

Appendix B. Example of Form PLS-A

To:				
APPLICATION FOR THE USE OF PORTABLE TRAFFIC SIGNALS				
This form may be used to:		Request permission from the road authority for the use of 2-way portable traffic signals.		
where a junction is involved		Apply to the road authority for portable traffic signal site specific approval.		
Applicant Details				
Statutory Undertaker / Client		<u>Contractor</u>		
Company		Company		
Address		Address		
Phone		Phone		
Fax		Fax		
Contact		Contact		
<u>First Emergency Contact out of hours</u>		Name & Phone No.		
<u>Second Emergency Contact out of hours</u>		Name & Phone No.		
Traffic Signal Supplier			Phone No.	
SRWR Reference No.			Works Ref.	
Location Details				
Address:				Traffic Sensitive?
				Yes No
OS Grid Ref:	Easting		Northing	
Are Traffic Management Plans required?				Yes No
If YES , please send a plan to 1:1250 or 1:2500 scale indicating the work area, location, and the traffic control arrangements.				
Purpose Of works				Urgent Yes No
Date and Time of works	From:			Proposed signal operation
	To:			Working day
Remarks				24 hours
				Night
				Off-peak

I agree to meet all reasonable costs incurred by the road authority in respect of the condition, operation and disconnection of the signals and in respect of giving emergency attention if the 'emergency contacts cannot be reached or are unable to rectify any fault within 2 hours of the first notification that the signals or associated signs are faulty. It should be noted that the Roads Authority and its employees in no way accept responsibility for any claims or demands which may be brought against it by third parties in any way by virtue of the installation operation or emergency rectification of these signals.

Sign

Date

APPLICATION MUST NOT BE TAKEN AS APPROVAL

Conditions

- 1) Upon receipt of the completed application form, the road authority will, if specific site approval is required, issue the approval. If site approval is not required, the road authority shall take the application as notification of the intention to use 2-way Portable Traffic Signals and confirm that specific site approval is not required.
- 2) The road authority must be notified if:
 - a) Any change is made to the date or time on the application.
 - b) The work is in the vicinity of any permanent signals including Pelican crossings.
 - c) The work is in the vicinity of a level crossing (Network Rail must also be consulted).
- 3) Where emergency or urgent works require portable traffic signals to be set up out with office hours, the applicant shall:
 - a) Obtain verbal approval from the appropriate road authority; and
 - b) Provide retrospective notification/application for written approval on the next working day; and
 - c) Provide details of the works location, nature of works, portable traffic signal layout, and both the Undertaker's and Contractor's contact phone numbers to the appropriate road authority.
- 4) At least **seven working days' notice shall be given** for all works other than emergency and urgent works. For emergency and urgent works, (i.e. when circumstances arise which could result in immediate danger to the public or severe damage to the road), agreement should be made verbally and must be followed by written confirmation as soon as reasonably practicable, preferably the next working day.

The road authority must be notified within 2 hours of signals being removed from carriageway. Any changes to start and finish dates must be notified and approved in advance.
- 5) Wherever signal control is to be used which contains or is near a junction, two scaled plans showing the proposed temporary site layout must accompany this application. It is a statutory requirement for the authority to issue written specific site approval before signals are installed, in these instances.
- 6) Signal Operation:
 - a) Working day is taken to be 0730hrs to 1900hrs
 - b) 24 hours is taken to be continuous use for duration of the works
 - c) Overnight is taken 1900hrs to 0730hrs
 - d) Off peak is taken to be 0915hrs to 1530hrs (Monday to Friday)
- 7) The signal equipment and traffic signs must satisfy fully all the requirements set out in the TSR&GD, and all other relevant regulations, directions, and technical memoranda. Procedures, layouts, and operations shall be in accordance with "*Safety at Street Works and Road Works - A Code of Practice*" and "*Traffic Signs Manual - Chapter 8*".
- 8) The mode of operation of the signals shall be "Vehicle Actuated", unless otherwise agreed by the road authority in writing.
- 9) All apparatus whether hired or owned by the user will be subject to a "beck and call" maintenance contract. The user must establish a safe working method of traffic control within 2 hours of notification of a fault or defect. The apparatus must be inspected and tested before delivery to site and the user must satisfy the road authority and police that the equipment meets all the necessary requirements and that a competent person has made the pre-delivery check. Stop/Go Boards must be on site, and in a fit state for use, when the site is manned.
- 10) When the site is in an urban environment, the apparatus must be of a type, which produces a noise level maintained below the first action level 85 dB(A). This will ensure that noise produced is kept to a minimum thus reducing the risk and any harmful effects to the public.

I agree to meet all reasonable costs incurred by the roads authority in respect of the condition, operation and disconnection of the signals and in respect of giving emergency attention in the event that the 'emergency contacts' cannot be reached or are unable to rectify any fault within 2 hours of the first notification that the signals or associated signs are faulty. It should be noted that the roads authority and its employees in no way accept responsibility for any claims or demands which may be brought against it by third parties in anyway by virtue of the installation operation or emergency rectification of these signals.

Sign

Date

APPLICATION MUST NOT BE TAKEN AS APPROVAL