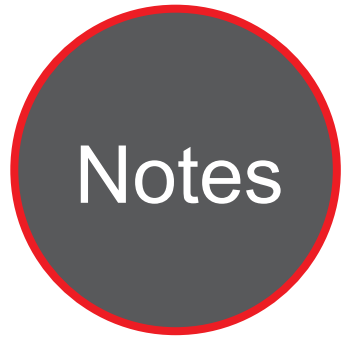




Caltrans Division of Research,
Innovation and System Information

Research



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Project Title:
Safety Effects of Yellow Alert
Changeable Message Signs

Task Number: 3192

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Safety Effect of Yellow Alert Changeable Message Signs

A study to identify and evaluate the safety effects of the Yellow Alert Changeable Message Signs on drivers.

WHAT IS THE NEED?

In 2015, a bill was signed into law in California that mandated the implementation of the Yellow Alert Changeable Message Signs (CMS) for hit-and-run accidents. The Yellow Alert CMS was briefly implemented in California, but shortly after, the Federal Highway Association (FHWA), which has strict regulations about what can be displayed on the CMS, ordered the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to discontinue the use of Yellow Alert.

In 2016, Caltrans requested for FHWA's approval to conduct a two-year demonstration program to evaluate the effectiveness of displaying Yellow Alert messages on CMS. FHWA denied Caltrans' request addressing safety concerns of using CMS. FHWA contended that the alert may distract drivers as they look for the subject vehicle, change driving behaviors when examining and reporting a suspected vehicle, and even follow or stop the suspected vehicle.

An in-depth study would provide an insight to Caltrans to decide if further actions for reinstating the Yellow Alert CMS should be pursued.



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WHAT ARE WE DOING?

The research team will utilize a survey to ask drivers about their understanding of the Yellow Alert and their responses after reading it. Drivers who indicate high likelihood to take actions after reading the Yellow Alert will be invited to participate in a simulation experiment to investigate the safety effect of their driving behavior.

WHAT IS OUR GOAL?

The primary objective of this research is to identify and evaluate the safety effects of the Yellow Alert CMS on drivers.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT?

The research is designed to provide a better understanding of the safety effects if the proposed Yellow Alert message displayed on CMS.

WHAT IS THE PROGRESS TO DATE?

The research team analyzed the data collected from the survey, using multiple quantitative and qualitative methods. The subjects for simulation study have been identified. Now the research team is preparing for the simulation study part of this effort.