

Township Announces Installation of Opticom

As a part of the reconstruction of Route 22 last summer, the Department of Transportation equipped the red lights with Opticom. Red lights at the following intersections now have Opticom capabilities: Route 22 at Shop-N-Save/Nissan; Route 22 at Penn Center Boulevard; Route 22 at Kingston Drive; Route 22 at Home Depot/Circuit City.

What exactly is Opticom?

The Opticom system is a traffic control system that provides a green light – and therefore intersection right-of-way to emergency vehicles. Equipped vehicles have an emitter, which broadcasts a visible light to a receiver, which is mounted on or near the traffic signal. The receiver is connected to a circuit card located inside of the traffic signal control cabinet. When the circuit card determines that the signal is valid, it will activate an output which will request the green light from the traffic controller for the approaching emergency vehicle.

What do I do if I am at the intersection when an emergency vehicle approaches?

If an emergency vehicle is approaching the intersection from a different direction, either towards you or from the side, and 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 yet entered the intersection, and if conditions safely allow, pull safely and carefully to the right side of the road and wait until the light stops flashing. If you passed through the intersection, be aware that one or more emergency vehicles could soon turn onto the road behind you, so be prepared to pull over if necessary.

If an emergency vehicle is approaching the intersection in the same direction that you are and the traffic signal is red, it will change to green. If you have not yet entered the intersection, and if conditions safely allow, pull safely and carefully to the right side of the road and wait.

What vehicles have Opticom?

Currently, fire trucks from VFC #4 and VFC #1 are equipped with Opticom. One of the Township's police cars also has this technology. WHEMS ambulances also have Opticom as do emergency vehicles from other jurisdictions, such as Monroeville. The Township's goal is to eventually equip all emergency vehicles with this technology and to also have Opticom installed at the intersection of Brown Avenue and Roland Road.

Questions?

If you would like to know more about the Township's Opticom system, or Opticom systems in general, please contact your local fire department, or the Wilkins Township Police Department (412-824-0032).

