

Fountain Valley Crosswalk Study

OVERVIEW

Katz Okitsu and Associates conducted a study for the City of Fountain Valley, CA, of over 30 communities who have installed in-pavement flashing crosswalk lights in the past 3 years. We also conducted an analysis to determine the effectiveness of the devices in reducing accidents. This is the first known attempt to quantify the potential safety benefits of this type of system.

The study found widespread support for the continued use of this treatment, however the support was not unanimous. Support was weakest among cities where pedestrians have been involved in traffic accidents following implementation of the flashing light system.

The study analyzed the reported safety record of approximately 30 locations that have been in place for over one year and compared it with the expected safety record for traditional crosswalk treatments. The system is not 100% effective in preventing pedestrian involvement in accidents, however the few accidents that have been reported may not have been susceptible to correction by the warning system. The system appears to have reduced the accident expectancy by 80%, however it is not known whether this is a novelty effect or will continue over time.

A number of users also expressed concern over maintenance issues and response to requests for additional devices. The study presents a potential warrant system that may be used to evaluate future locations.