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Draft:Traffic light

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Traffic lights, also known as **traffic signals**, **traffic lamps**, **signal lights**, **stop lights** and **robots**,^[1] and also known technically as **traffic control signals**^[2] are signalling devices positioned at road intersections, **pedestrian crossings** and other locations to control competing flows of traffic. Traffic lights were first installed in 1868 in [London](#)^[3] and are now used all over the world.

Traffic lights alternate the **right of way** accorded to road users by displaying lights of a standard color (red, orange/amber, and green) following a universal **color code**. In the typical sequence of color phases:

- the green light allows traffic to proceed in the direction denoted, if it is safe to do so
- the orange/amber light denoting prepare to stop short of the intersection, if it is safe to do so
- the red signal prohibits any traffic from proceeding

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Although it was said to be successful at controlling traffic, its operational life was brief. It exploded on 2 January 1869, as a result of a leak in one of the gas lines underneath the pavement, injuring^[5] or killing^[6] the policeman who was operating it. With doubts about its safety, the concept was abandoned until electric signals became available.

The first electric traffic light was developed in 1912 by [Lester Wire](#), an American policeman of [Salt Lake City, Utah](#), who also used red-green lights.^[7] On 5 August 1914, the [American Traffic Signal Company](#) installed a traffic signal system on the corner of East 105th Street and [Euclid Avenue](#) in [Cleveland, Ohio](#).^{[8][9]} It had two colors, red and green, and a **buzzer**, based on the design of James Hoge, to provide a warning for color changes. The design by James Hoge^[10] allowed police and fire stations to **control the signals in case of emergency**. The first four-way, three-color traffic light was created by police officer [William Potts](#) in [Detroit, Michigan](#) in 1920.^[11]



An LED traffic light in [Portsmouth, England](#).



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