

Give way rule 2012



NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY
WAKA KOTAHI

information sheet

To: Road controlling authorities

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Changes to the give way rules in 2012

At 5am on Sunday 25 March 2012, two of the give-way rules are changing. This has been made possible by the signing of the Road User Rule Amendment 2011.

There are two give way rules that will be changing.

Change 1: The left turn versus right turn rule

From 5am on 25 March 2012, this new rule will require all traffic turning right to give way to a vehicle coming from the opposite direction and turning left. This only applies at cross roads, T-intersections and driveways where:

- both vehicles are facing each other with no signs or signals (neither vehicle is controlled)
- both vehicles are facing give way signs
- both vehicles are facing stop signs
- both vehicles are facing green traffic signals

Example facing no sign or signal:



Change 2: At uncontrolled T-intersections ('uncontrolled' means when there are no signs or signals to tell you what to do)

At an uncontrolled T-intersection, all traffic from a terminating road (bottom of the T) will have to give way to all traffic on a continuing road (top of the T). This will bring it into line with T-intersections where there are Stop or Give Way signs on the terminating road.



This rule change will also apply to uncontrolled driveways, such as at a supermarket or hospital. From 5am on 25 March 2012 the traffic exiting the driveway will need to give way to all traffic on the road.

All vehicles entering or exiting a driveway must continue to give way to pedestrians on a footpath, or cyclists and pedestrians on a cycle path or shared path. Drivers should not pull out to block the footpath in front of pedestrians and cyclists.

Communicating the changes

As mentioned in earlier updates, a public awareness campaign will be run in the month leading up to the date of the actual change on 25 March 2012, with national advertising starting 10 days before the change. This late February start date is necessary to avoid public confusion and minimise the risk of people starting to use the new rules too early.

The NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) is developing the public information campaign material ready for use in 2012. To ensure clarity and consistency of message across the country and avoid public confusion, the NZTA is very keen for the campaign material it develops to be used by all organisations involved in road safety. To help ensure this happens, all campaign material will be readily available online for councils (and other key stakeholders) to use.

We anticipate this resource material will be ready in early February 2012 with an embargo until late February. It will include digital versions of the following, which can be downloaded for use: images of the new rules (similar to Road Code format), technical wording, posters, leaflets and translated leaflets. We will be in touch again closer to the time once this material is finalised.

The NZTA has been asked by some to use the give way change campaign as an opportunity to reinforce other road rules. To ensure the messages around the give way change campaign are not diluted, the public information campaign should be focused only on the specific changes to the give way rules.

The web page www.giveway.govt.nz will continue to be updated with information and resources for the public as we move towards implementation. It was last updated on 22 November.

Engineering reviews

The NZTA is currently working through what these changes will mean for the state highway network. From our experience to date, the following outlines some factors that local road controlling authorities (RCAs) may wish to consider in advance of the rule changes taking effect. This information is an update to the information supplied to RCAs in October.

We suggest RCAs identify locations where the changes will have implications for road markings, signal timings or intersection layout. Intersections that currently cause difficulties, or which may cause issues when the give way rules change, need to be identified in advance.

Plans should be underway, or soon be in place, to observe activity at any potentially problematic intersections so any issues can be identified quickly, and remedial action taken as soon as possible where necessary. This should be either before the rule changes or immediately after should the need arise.

With some intersections a 'wait and see' policy might be suitable and any minor issues can be sorted out when they start to eventuate. However, waiting for a pattern of issues raised by the public about a site to develop, then undertaking an investigation, and then developing and implementing a suitable solution could result in a delay of many months. Taking the time to identify potential problems will allow RCAs to be ready to act quickly.

The AA is offering to help, so if you wish to make use of their people to suggest or identify intersections to monitor, please contact your local AA branch.

It is important to note that the change to the give way rule will not affect existing signs or road markings at intersections. Signs and markings provide important safety benefits for road users by highlighting intersections, particularly at night and during poor weather.

Potential issues to consider

There are potentially two issues to consider. The first involves capacity and queuing issues, particularly for right turning traffic that must now give way to both through and left turn traffic. The second relates to potential confusion particularly around larger junctions.

1. Capacity

Capacity issues are most likely to occur where:

- right turn movements are currently approaching capacity, and regular right turn queuing occurs
- signalised intersections involve a filter right turn
- intersections have high left turn volumes
- right turns are opposed by shared through and left turn lanes.

In dense urban networks, it is likely that the rule change could require changes to traffic signal timings, possible changes in phasing (dedicated right turn phases), or changes in queue length.

Most dense urban networks run some form of traffic model. It is a relatively simple task to change the give way rule in these models. The models should be run for the peak period.

- Run the current year and existing rule.
- Switch to the new rule and run.

- Identify those intersections where the volumes will change by more than say 15% (equivalent to five years growth at 3%) and identify any increases in queue lengths.
- Re optimise the traffic signals (most models will do this so it will not be a manual exercise) and report as above.

The output from this process is likely to be:

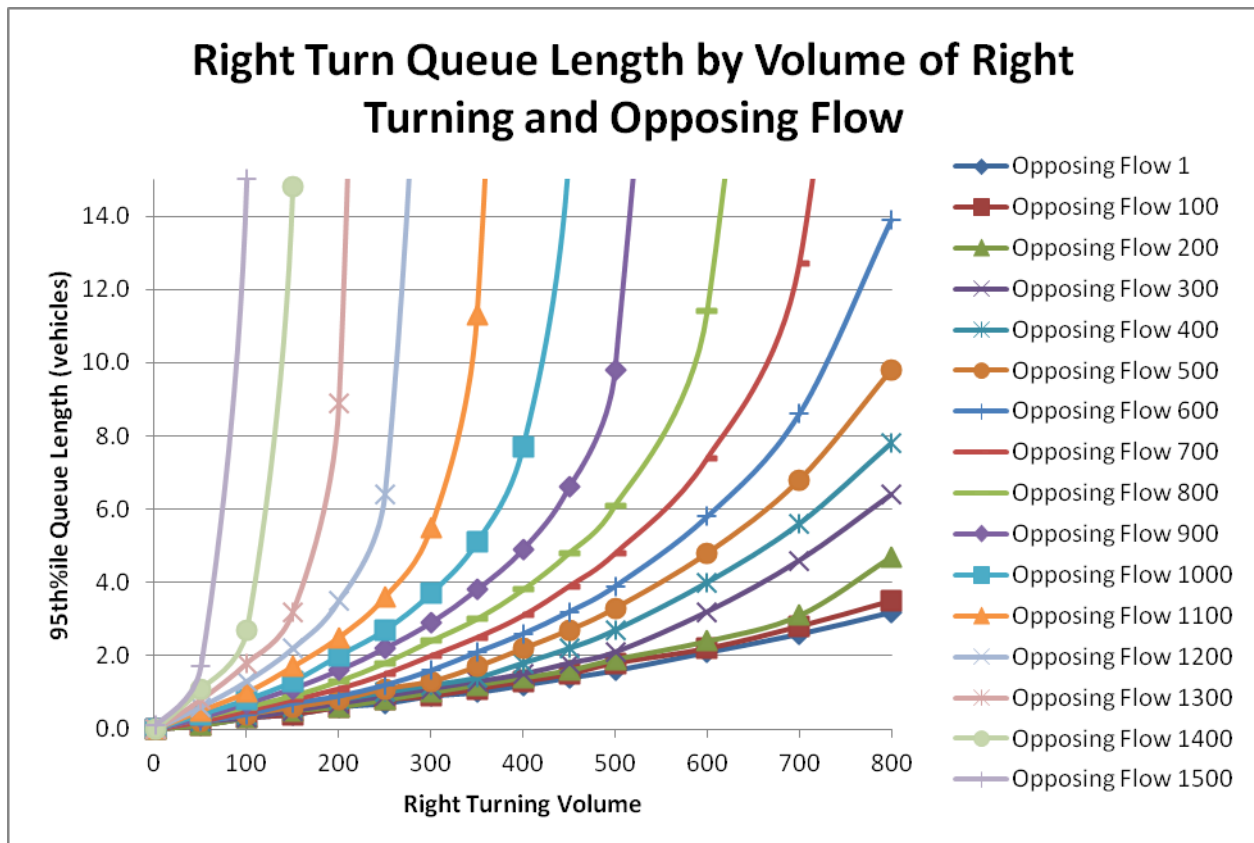
- a list of intersections that are worth keeping an eye on following the change over
- a list of potential signal timing changes that may be implemented should an issue develop.

In the case of rural road networks and urban networks without the benefit of traffic models, the following graph can be used to gain an indication of whether increases in right turn queues are a possibility.

In general we are looking at roads carrying more than around 1200 vehicles per hour which, assuming 12% traffic in the peak hour, means roads carrying more than 10,000 AADT, and with high levels of turning traffic (both left and right). Examples could include side roads leading to schools, where pupils are dropped off and collected at particular times, or large employer with common start times.

It is possible to use the figure below to establish whether further investigation of right turn queuing could be required.

The approach is relatively simple. Estimate the peak right turn volume and the opposing through traffic and look up the expected 95th percentile queue length. Now add the opposing left turn volume that right turn vehicles must give way to and reassess.



This is a simple screening tool to help identify situations you might want to investigate in greater detail.

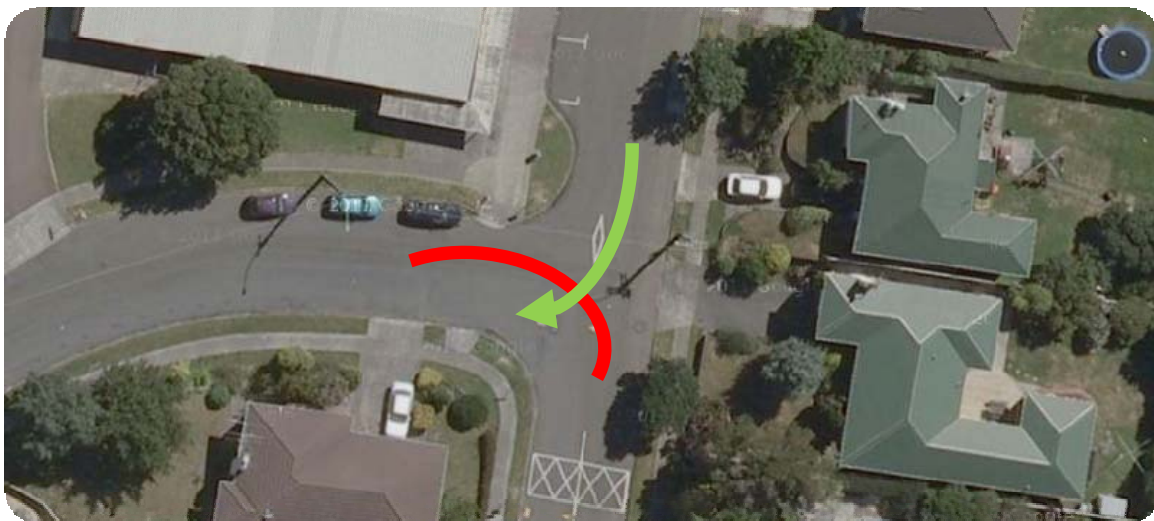
For example: A primary and secondary school are located on Side Road. In the morning peak 300 northbound vehicles turn right into Side Road. A further 400 southbound vehicles turn left into Side Road while 700 vehicles continue straight through the intersection.

In the before case the 300 right turners give way to 700 straight through vehicles and a 95th percentile queue is around two vehicles.

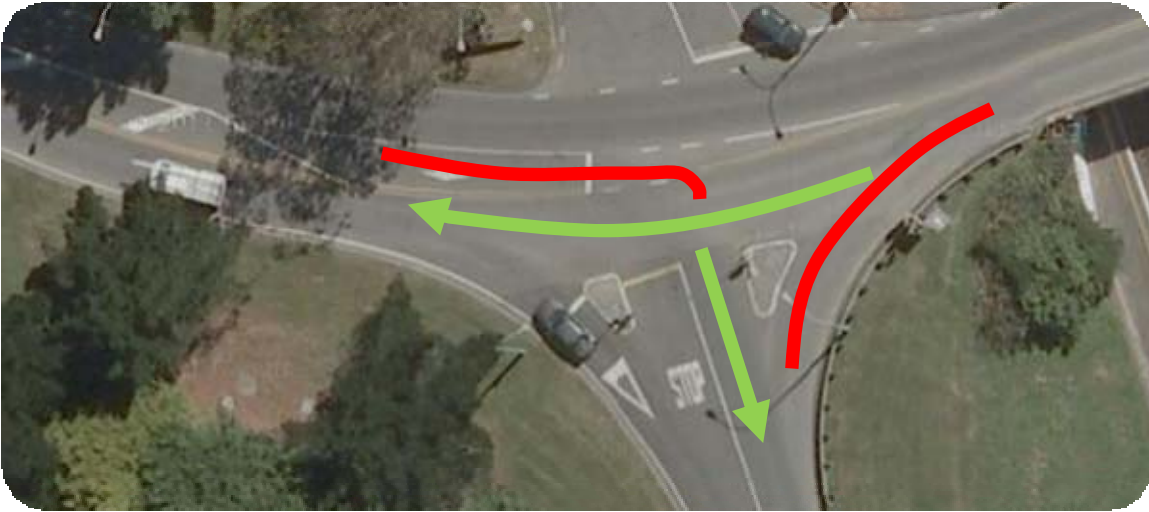
Under the new rule the 300 right turning vehicles will give way to 1100 left turn and straight through vehicles. The max queue is expected to more than double. This being the case a more detailed investigation may be warranted.

2. Confusion around larger junctions

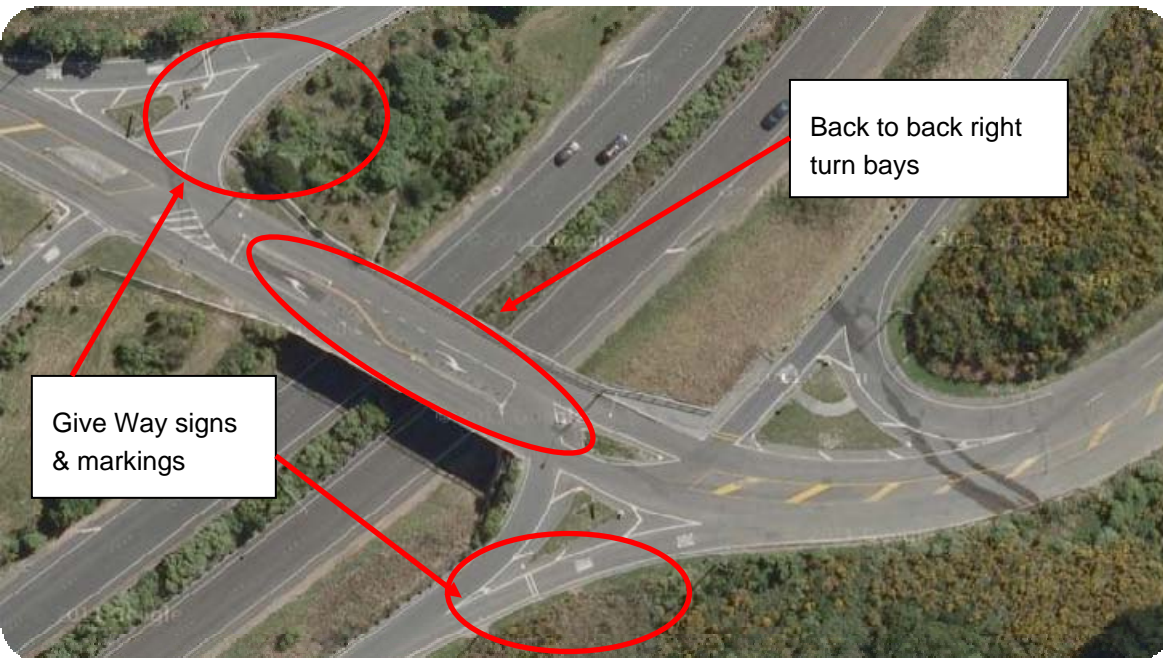
The key area of potential confusion relates to intersection layout and what constitutes an intersection. The rule itself is couched in terms of continuing roads and terminating roads, based upon the projection (promulgation) of kerb lines. The location of the intersection is quite clear in the figure below and the rule is easy to apply.

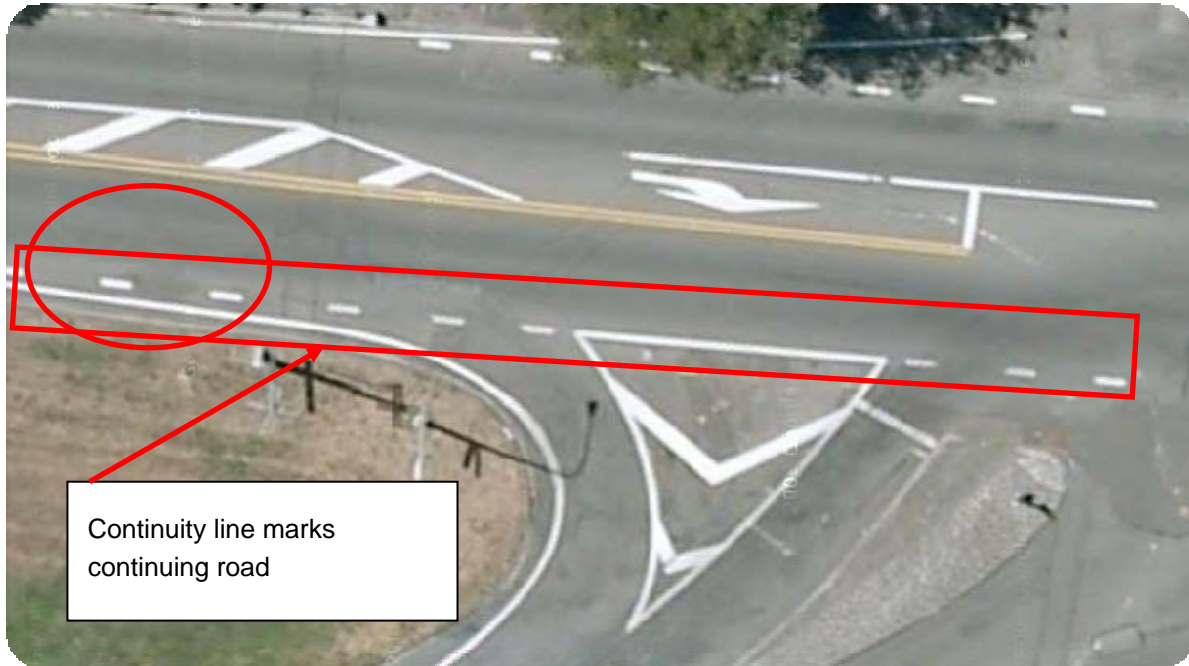


However, in theory the intersection below could be two intersections, although such subtleties may well be lost on the general public.



To minimise the potential for such confusion the expected behaviour should be reinforced. Options include Give Way signs and markings and/or use of continuity lines to clearly indicate which is the continuing road. Note this will also assist in addressing possible capacity issues related to back to back right turn bays, all of which should be checked.





For more information, please contact your usual NZTA representative.

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