



## **Safety: Signaling a Stop**

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Chairman, Safety and Rules Committee**

I have received some requests to clarify one of the new safety rules in regard to the method motorcar operators should use to signal their intent to slow down or stop motorcars operated at NARCOA sanctioned events. Section 2, Operating Rule #13 of the NARCOA Book of Rules, Number 3, states, in part: "STOPPING: Show a red flag, flashing red light, or a stop light to signal the following cars of a stop." Under this rule, a flashing red light on the back of a motorcar is a signal to the following cars of a stop. This is not a new rule. To have a red light flashing continuously (like a FRED) on the back of a motorcar would be confusing to all of the cars following the car with the light.

The Safety and Rules Committee and the NARCOA Board of Directors made changes to the rule book in an attempt to bring some consistency and better signaling procedures to the way our members equip and operate their motorcars at motorcar events.

In the past, there have been many rear-end collisions at motorcar meets resulting in anything from minor fender benders to those requiring emergency medical attention for injured passengers. It was felt that a better method of signaling a stop might have prevented some of these accidents.

In a perfect world, simply reminding operators to pay attention, keep proper distances, and obey the speed limit would eliminate the problem. But all you have to do is drive your car down the street and it is obvious we do not live in a perfect world. We do not use our motorcars for the purpose for which they were originally designed, so our operating rules and equipment standards are an attempt to regulate the safe use of these machines for the way we use them. To ignore this fact would be irresponsible and might jeopardize our insurance coverage and our reputation for safety.

There are three accepted methods to signal a stop:

1. A red or red orange flag at least 12" by 12" should be displayed outside the car when the car is either slowed or stopped. The flag should be kept inside the car at all other times so the operator of the following car will not be confused as to your intent.

2. A flashing red light at least 2" in diameter and activated manually with a switch when the car is either slowed or stopped. These lights should only flash upon a brake application.

3. A red stop light at least 2" in diameter and activated automatically when the brakes are applied. This light would be operated by a switch that applies power to the light when the brake handle or pedal is moved from its resting position. These lights may flash.

These are minimum standards, and larger flags or lights are acceptable and encouraged. There are no standards for bulb wattage or light location but common sense would dictate that the light be bright enough and located in a position that it can be seen clearly by the following cars.

The flashing red lights or stop lights may be one or more added to the standard equipment lights or a dual filament bulb or fixture may replace the standard tail lamps. If dual filament bulbs are used, the light should burn dimly for the tail light and brighter when the brakes are applied (just like in the standard automobile). The normal standard for motorcar tail lights is that they be visible from at least 500 feet during darkness.

If the operator wishes to draw even more attention to his intent to stop, he may have the brake light flash or flash alternately (like a railroad crossing light) when the brakes are applied.

Section 1, Equipment Standards #12 states that Stoplights (as defined above) are required for motorcars operated at NARCOA-sanctioned events during hours of darkness. This is the only new rule concerning signaling a stop. Since any time we place our cars on the rails there is a chance that it might be dark before we take them off the track, it would be a good idea to equip all motorcars with stop lights. Especially during darkness, you need all the notice you can get that a car in front of you is stopping.

If you take your car to a meet where it is known in advance that you will be operating after dark, your car should have stop lights. Although this is the only change to the rules on this subject, it is good that attention be drawn to this area of operation and a new consciousness may result in a drop in the frequency of rear end collisions.

The use of automatic stop lights is an easy and sure way of letting the guy behind you know you are slowing down or coming to a stop. It does not insure that he is paying attention and will stop before he hits you. It is your job to cover your rear as best you can and the job of the guy following you to pay attention. Safety must be everyone's first concern every time we set our cars on the track. Having fun runs a close second.

The Safety and Rules Committee and Board of Directors are trying to make our events as safe a place as possible to operate our motorcars. The cooperation of all NARCOA members is requested in this matter.