

# IMPLEMENTATION SPOTLIGHT



## FAST FACTS

- **Two colors are better than one.** A combination of green and amber significantly improves visibility.
- **More lights are not better.** A simple configuration is less overwhelming.
- **Flash pattern matters.** A single green flash is all that's needed; more flashing can distract motorists.

“Having the data to support our use of green lights on winter maintenance trucks allowed us to confidently expand their use on all other MDOT vehicles and equipment.”

—Jim Gaus,  
Occupational Safety Specialist  
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## Green Strobes Added to MDOT Winter Maintenance Vehicles Increase Visibility

Properly configured on MDOT maintenance vehicles, flashing green lights make roads safer for all users.

Though MDOT snowplows have had flashing amber lights for years, the vehicles were struck by passing motorists navigating dark and snowy conditions.

After learning of other states' success with adding green lights to the existing amber ones – and changing Michigan's law to make green a viable option – MDOT conducted a research project to scientifically determine the best placement, brightness level and flash pattern for maximum visibility and effectiveness.

MDOT first began adding green lights to all of the state's winter maintenance vehicles in 2017 for a cost of approximately

\$180,000. With data-driven research results in hand, MDOT invested an additional \$40,000 to add green strobes to its first responder vehicles and received a \$63,000 grant through the federal [State Transportation Innovation Council \(STIC\) Incentives program](#) to purchase lights for other MDOT maintenance vehicles. Going forward, equipment will be replaced following MDOT's standard procedures, and no additional costs to put this research into practice are anticipated.

Feedback from the public and MDOT's maintenance crews has been overwhelmingly positive; motorists like the increased visibility, and plow drivers have experienced fewer incidents.

### Implementation Information

Original Research Report Number: [SPR-1692](#)  
Start year: 2020

Initial cost: \$180,000  
Additional ongoing costs: None

### Learn More

[Research Final Report](#)  
[Research Spotlight](#)  
[Video Spotlight](#)