

Emergency Flashing Lights on Vehicles

Under road traffic law, what colour/type of flashing light can be used?

Vehicle being used ¹	Description	Type of Flashing Light Permitted
By a member of the Garda Síochána		Blue (Max. 50 watts)
As a fire brigade vehicle	Includes a vehicle used by a senior fire officer in the performance of his or her duty as such officer. A 'senior fire officer' means a fire officer not below the grade of Assistant Fire Officer (Prevention) but including the grades of Second Officer and Third Officer	Blue (Max. 50 watts)
By persons providing an ambulance service		Blue (Max. 50 watts)
By the Irish Prison Service		Blue (Max. 50 watts)
As an Irish Coast Guard vehicle, with or without a trailer	Used by a senior manager in the Irish Coast Guard in the performance of his or her duty as such officer. A 'senior manager in the Irish Coast Guard' means an officer of the Irish Coast Guard not below the grade of Divisional Officer.	Blue (Max. 50 watts)
For the delivery or collection of human transplant organs, human blood or human blood products		Blue (Max. 50 watts)
As a Marked Military Police vehicle	a mechanically propelled Defence Forces vehicle used by a member of the Military Police Corps	Blue (Max. 50 watts)
As a breakdown vehicle	vehicle used for towing broken down mechanically propelled vehicles, trailers or semi-trailers to the nearest convenient place of safety or repair and includes a vehicle used in connection with and in the immediate vicinity of a breakdown	Amber (Max. 36 watts)
As a road clearance vehicle	vehicle used for dealing with frost, ice or snow on roads and includes a vehicle used for cutting of roadside hedges / grass verges or in the sweeping of roads	Amber (Max. 36 watts)
As a road works vehicle	vehicle used in connection with the construction, maintenance and improvement of roads or in connection with the provision and maintenance of water supplies, sewerage and drainage services;	Amber (Max. 36 watts)
By a local authority or other person authorised by a local authority in the collection and disposal of refuse		Amber (Max. 36 watts)
In the provision or maintenance of telephone services or of gas or electricity supply	Must be lit only when the vehicle is in use at the scene of operations	Amber (Max. 36 watts)
As a Customs and Excise patrol vehicle	Customs and Excise patrol vehicle' means a mechanically propelled vehicle used by an official of Customs and Excise in the performance of his or her duties as such official	Amber (Max. 36 watts)

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¹ used ONLY in the performance of duty

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the law regarding the use of flashing Blue lights on vehicles? Only certain vehicles can have flashing lights and the colour permitted depends on the type of emergency. Please refer to the table above for more information.

Where should flashing lights be fitted/located on an emergency vehicle? Under Road Traffic Law, the flashing lamp should, where possible, be fitted on the roof of the vehicle on a point on its longitudinal axis and no part of the illuminated surface of the lamp should be less than 1.27 metres from the ground.

By law, are emergency vehicles required to have reflective (high visibility) markings? No.

I am a member of the Irish Coastguard. Can flashing lights be used by anyone responding to a medical emergency?

If you are a senior manager in the Irish Coast Guard driving an “Irish Coast Guard” vehicle in the performance of your duty as such an officer, then yes, blue or flashing amber lamps can be used. A “senior manager” means an officer of the Irish Coast Guard not below the grade of Divisional Officer. Please refer to the table above for clarification.

Are amber flashing lights legal over cabs on HCVs? If your vehicle is being used in the performance of a duty listed in the above table (e.g. road works, breakdown etc.), it can be fitted with flashing amber lights. Otherwise it is illegal.

Does a forklift truck require a blue beacon to be fitted to the front and a red to the back? No. Only an amber flashing light may be used and only in the course of duty.

Do all emergency vehicles have to be roadworthiness tested? The following emergency vehicles are exempt from roadworthiness testing under current legislation:

- vehicles which are owned or operated by members of An Garda Síochána
- vehicles which are owned or operated by the Defence Forces

All other emergency vehicles must be roadworthiness tested. See Section 18 of [S.I. No. 322 of 2014](#) of the Road Traffic (National Car Testing) Regulations 2009 for more detail. You may also wish to refer to [S.I. No. 347 of 2013](#) Commercial Vehicle Roadworthiness (Vehicle Testing) (No. 2) Regulations 2013.

