

VISUAL SIGNALS

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PREFACE

Efficient combat operations depend on clear, accurate, and secure communication among ground units, Army aviation, and supporting Air Force elements. Control and coordination are achieved by the most rapid means of communication available between men and units. When electrical means of communication are inadequate, or not available, a station-to-station system of visual communication is an alternate means for transmitting orders, information, or requests for aid and/or support.

Through the use of arm-and-hand signals, flags, pyrotechnics, and other visual aids, messages may be transmitted. Although many of these signals are widely used, incorporated into unit communications-electronics operating instructions and standing operating procedures, Army wide standardization will increase their effectiveness.

The purpose of this manual is to standardize visual signals and to serve as a training reference.

It is a guide. It does not cover all visual signals used in the Army, only those that are commonly used. Signals used with equipment (for example, mortar) or during operations (for example, pathfinder, jumpmaster) are in manuals that relate to such operations.

The proponent of this publication is HQ TRADOC. Submit changes for improving this publication on DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) and forward to Commandant, US Army Infantry School, ATTN: ATSH- B-ID, Fort Benning, GA 31905- 5410.

Unless otherwise stated, whenever the masculine gender is used, both men and women are included.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1-1. General

Visual signals are any means of communication that require sight and can be used to transmit prearranged messages rapidly over short distances. This includes the devices and means used for the recognition and identification of friendly forces.

1-2. Types of Visual Signals

The most common types of visual signals are arm-and-hand, flag, pyrotechnic, and ground-to-air signals. However, soldiers are not limited to the types of signals discussed and may use what is available. Chemical light sticks, flashlights, and other items can be used provided their use is standardized within a unit and understood by soldiers and units working in the area. The only limit is the soldier's initiative and imagination.

1-3. Limitations

Visual signals have certain limitations

- a. The range and reliability of visual communications are significantly reduced during periods of poor visibility and when terrain restricts observation.
- b. They may be misunderstood.
- c. They are vulnerable to enemy interception and may be used for deception purposes.

CHAPTER 2

Arm-and-Hand Signals for Ground Forces

2-1. General

Signals illustrated with a single arrowhead indicate that the signal is not continuously repeated; however, it may be repeated at intervals until acknowledged or the desired action is executed. Signals illustrated with double arrowheads are repeated continuously until acknowledged or the desired action is taken. Signals are illustrated as normally seen by the viewer. Some signals are illustrated in oblique, right angle, or overhead views for clarity.

2-2. Signals to Control Vehicle Drivers and/or Crews

These are the arm-and-hand and light signals used to guide and direct vehicles. Flashlights are used at night to direct vehicles. Blue filters should be used whenever possible in order to preserve the driver's night vision. Chemical lights can also be used and have less effect on the driver's night vision (Figures 2-1 through 2-22).

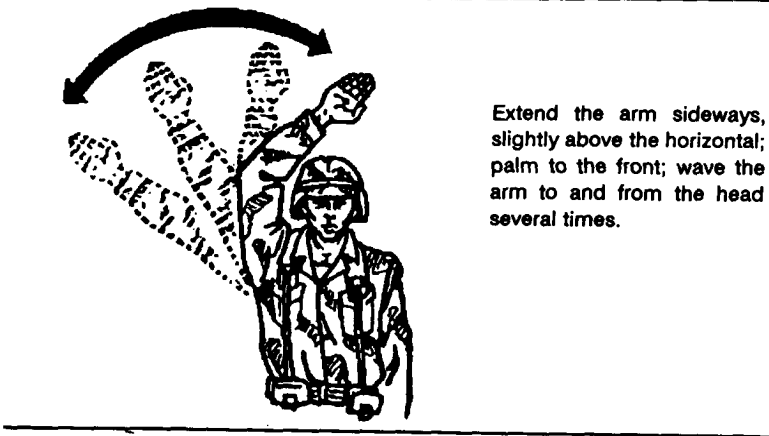


Figure 2-1. ATTENTION.