

FACTS ABOUT TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNS

Where should STOP signs be installed?

STOP signs are a valuable tool to control traffic when installed in the right location and under the right conditions. However, STOP signs are only to be installed after a careful traffic engineering evaluation of existing conditions indicates that their installation is appropriate. Nationally recognized standards state that **TWO-WAY STOP** control can be used where any of the following conditions or "warrants" are met:



- The lesser street intersects a street with a higher classification;
- Sight distances approaching the intersection are substandard and the general right-of-way rule is hazardous; or
- Where there is a record of a crash pattern that is correctable with right-of-way control.

At intersections where these conditions do not exist, and a full STOP is not necessary at all times, a **YIELD** sign may be installed.



MULTI-WAY STOP control is intended for the intersection of collector or arterial type streets, where traffic volumes are approximately equal. National standards allow Multi-way stop control where any of the following warrants are met:

- If a traffic signal is warranted, multi-way stop control can be installed in the interim;
- The average volume of vehicles entering the intersection from the major street is 300 vehicles per hour for any 8-hours of an average day, and the average volume of vehicles and pedestrians entering the intersection from the minor street is 200 per hour for the same 8-hours; or
- Where there is a record of five or more crashes in a 12-month period that are correctable with multi-way stop control.



Can STOP signs be installed to reduce speeding?

Studies have shown that installing STOP signs where they are not warranted reduces speed only in the immediate vicinity of the signs. Between intersections drivers accelerate as soon as possible, to a speed faster than they drove before STOP signs were installed. They do this apparently to make up for time lost at the STOP signs.

Will installing STOP signs reduce traffic in my neighborhood?

Drivers tend to select the most direct routes to get from one place to another. That explains why studies have shown traffic volumes typically stay the same after the installation of unwarranted STOP signs. Drivers tend to see the unwarranted STOP signs as obstacles and frequently disregard the signs.

In Summary...

There are nationally recognized standards for the installation of traffic control signs. When STOP signs are installed in locations that do not meet the national standards, they are considered unwarranted and are viewed by drivers as unreasonable. This frequently results in flagrant violations, an attitude of contempt or disrespect in motorists, and a false sense of security for other drivers and pedestrians. For these reasons, STOP signs should not be installed to slow traffic or reduce traffic volumes.