



POLICY

STOP SIGNS

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to give guidance for the installation and use of STOP signs in accordance with the Federal Highway Administration's *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways* (MUTCD). STOP signs are used when necessary to assign right-of-way at intersections for drivers and bicyclists and to provide pedestrian awareness. A properly located STOP sign should be perceived by drivers and other road users as a safe and logical place to stop and yield to the right-of-way of other 'more important' traffic movements. These 'more important' movements should be frequent enough, or at higher speeds, to support the need to stop, look and proceed. Placement of STOP signs at appropriate locations commands respect for the sign and enhances the safety of all road users in the community.



A common misuse of STOP signs is to place them with intention of interrupting through-traffic flow. Many residents perceive that installation of STOP signs can reduce neighborhood traffic speeds or cause traffic to divert elsewhere. Nationally, studies have shown different results. Any speed reduction is generally limited to the immediate vicinity of the STOP sign where vehicles must brake, stop and accelerate. Resulting mid-block speeds can even become higher. In addition, braking to a stop and accelerating back to travel speed increases both fuel consumption and vehicle emissions.

While most drivers comply with STOP signs, some aggressive drivers will do what they can to minimize their delay. When STOP signs are arbitrarily placed with sole purpose of stopping vehicles, and not assigning right-of-way to more important intersection movements, increased flagrant violations can be expected. Elements of a dangerous situation emerge: an increased tendency of driver violations of the STOP sign coupled with a false sense of security this same STOP sign may give to other drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists at the intersection.

One-Way and Two-Way STOP

One-Way or Two-Way STOP sign control is used to facilitate the free movement of traffic along one of two intersecting streets by requiring traffic on the other street to fully stop and yield the right-of-way until it is safe to cross. STOP signs are not required at every cross street or driveway intersection, particularly at intersections where the normal right-of-way rules are obvious. STOP signs should be used on the minor street approach(es) if engineering judgment indicates that one or more of the following conditions exist:

- Minor street entering a major through street or highway.
- High speeds, restricted view or crash records indicate a need for control by a STOP sign.
- Intersection where application of the normal right-of-way rule would not be expected to provide reasonable compliance with the law.
- Unsignalized intersection in a signalized area.

STOP signs should be installed in a manner that minimizes the number of vehicles having to stop. At intersections where a full stop is not necessary at all times, consideration should be given to using less restrictive measures such as YIELD signs. The decision regarding the appropriate street to stop should be based on engineering judgment. In most cases, the street carrying the lowest volume of traffic should be stopped. In cases where two intersecting streets have similar volumes and characteristics, additional considerations include:

- Controlling the direction that conflicts the most with established pedestrian crossing activity or school walking routes.
- Controlling the direction that has obscured vision, dips or bumps that already require drivers to use lower operating speeds.
- Controlling the direction that has the best sight distance to observe conflicting traffic.

A provision of the City's Comprehensive Transportation Policy is: "To develop, implement and maintain appropriate measures that encourage through-travel along the collector and arterial street network rather than along residential streets." In this regard, the use of STOP control along collector and arterial streets should be minimized to the extent practical.

Policy Statement:

STOP signs will generally be located on side-street approaches to collector and arterial streets.

STOP signs may be located on local street approaches to other local streets; such use is considered optional and should be based on engineering judgment.

The use of STOP signs along collector and arterial streets should be minimized to the extent practical so as to promote and maintain safe and efficient travel along these routes.

STOP signs will not be used for speed control.

Multi-Way STOP

Multi-Way STOP control can be a useful intersection control if certain traffic conditions exist. Considerations include expectations and safety of all road users. Multi-Way STOP is appropriate when the volume of traffic on the intersecting streets is approximately equal. The decision to install Multi-Way STOP control should be based on an engineering study, including consideration of the following:



- Where traffic signals are warranted, Multi-Way STOP can be used as an interim measure.
- A significant history of intersection crashes, the types of which are susceptible to correction by Multi-Way STOP.
- Minimum traffic volumes: at least 300 vehicles per hour approaching on the major street for eight hours of a day; and at least 200 vehicles per hour (including bicycles and pedestrians) on the minor street(s) for the same eight hours.

Multi-Way stop control is the most restrictive form of intersection traffic control; every road user must stop, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It should not be considered unless less-restrictive measures are ineffective.

Policy Statement:

New Multi-Way STOP will only be implemented at an intersection pursuant to an engineering study that determines that traffic characteristics and the unique features of the intersection meet the engineering criteria outlined in the MUTCD for installing Multi-Way STOP.

There may be Multi-Way STOP intersections in the City that do not currently meet the engineering criteria for such control. This includes intersections where traffic conditions may have changed over the years, where STOP signs may have been installed in the past without appropriate engineering study or where STOP signs were installed for sole purpose of reducing traffic speed. It is in the interest of the City as well as the traveling public that these locations be reviewed on a periodic basis for purpose of updating traffic control as appropriate, including removal of unqualified Multi-Way STOP.

Multi-Way STOP will not be used for speed control.

Implementation Process

All requests for installation or removal of STOP signs will be considered by the Traffic Operations Committee. If installation or removal of a STOP sign at a specific location is recommended by the Traffic Operations Committee, said recommendation, accompanied by appropriate resolution amending the City Ordinance, will be presented to City Council for final approval. If not recommended, the applicant will be so notified by TOC with a copy of findings reported to City Council.