



# STOP SIGNS



## GENERAL

Each year, the City of El Centro receives many inquiries about installing stop signs as a way to reduce speeding. However, research shows that other measures are often more effective than adding more stop signs. The purpose of stop signs is to assign right-of-way at an intersection, not to control speeding.

Public understanding of the function of stop signs is one of the most critical elements in reducing speeding and traffic accidents.

The following information explains the City's policies on traffic controls and the correct use of stop control at City maintained intersections.

## INSTALLATION POLICIES FOR TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES

The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) determines the size, shape and color of all traffic signs. This manual has criteria for installing signs and thus creates uniformity from State to State. The criteria is also known as "traffic warrants".

These warrants identify specific traffic, bicycle and pedestrian volumes, accident history and any unusual conditions, which must be present at the intersection, before these traffic control devices may be installed.

## TWO-WAY STOP CONTROL

Stop signs are installed at an intersection only after careful engineering evaluation of the following criteria:

- ◇ Stopping the direction that conflicts the most with established pedestrian crossing activity or school walking routes.
- ◇ Stopping the direction that has obscured vision, dips, or bumps that already require drivers to use lower operating speeds.
- ◇ Stopping the direction that has the longest distance of uninterrupted flow approaching the intersection.
- ◇ Stopping the direction that has the best sight distance to conflicting traffic; and
- ◇ At highway-railroad grade crossings without gates or flashing signals.

Experience has shown that simply improving the intersection visibility by prohibiting parking near the intersection is often more effective in reducing traffic accidents. This often reduces the need to install more restrictive intersection controls.

Overuse of stop signs reduces their effectiveness and if installed where not justified, causes drivers to speed up between stop sign controlled intersections rather than slow down and to ignore them altogether.

### MULTI-WAY STOP CONTROL

The City frequently receives requests to install multi-way stop control at intersections where two-way stop control exists. Multi-way stop control is used where the volume of traffic on the intersection roads is approximately equal.

Requests are carefully evaluated using the following established warrants provided in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices:

- ◇ *Interim Measure:* Where traffic control signals are justified, the multi-way stop is an interim measure that can be installed quickly to control traffic while arrangements are being made for the installation of the traffic control signal.
- ◇ *Crashes:* A crash problem, as indicated by 5 or more reported crashes in a 12-month period that are susceptible to correction by a multi-way stop installation. Such crashes include right and left turn collisions as well as right angle collisions.
- ◇ *Minimum Volumes:* the vehicular volume entering the intersection from the major street approaches averages at least 300 vehicles per hour for any 8 hours of an average day, and the combined vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle volume entering the intersection from the minor street approaches averages at least 200 units per hour for the same 8 hours, with an average delay to minor-street vehicular traffic of at least 30 seconds per vehicle during the highest hour.
- ◇ *Posted Speed Limit:* If posted speed of the major-street traffic exceeds 40 mph the minimum vehicular volume warrants are 70 percent of the above values.
- ◇ *Multiple Warrants:* Where no single warrant is satisfied, but where crash and volume warrants are all satisfied to 80 percent of the minimum values, a multi-way stop control may also be considered.

### REQUESTS AND INQUIRES

If you have any questions, requests or suggestions concerning traffic in general, please call the Engineering Division of the Public Works Department at **(760) 337-5182** or submit your request via the Online Request for City Service Form.