

# Stop Sign Information



Each year, the City receives numerous requests to install stop signs. This document has been designed to answer some of the most common questions residents have about stop signs and when installation is appropriate.

## **What is the purpose of a stop sign?**

Many people believe stop signs are designed to reduce speed. However, the main purpose of a stop sign is to assign right-of-way at intersections.

## **Can stop signs be used to reduce traffic speeds or cut-through traffic?**

No, studies have shown stop signs are ineffective speed control devices. Vehicles often increase speed after a stop sign to make up for "lost time". Stop signs are also ineffective at reducing the amount of cut-through traffic on a street.

## **If stop signs can't reduce speed or cut-through traffic, what can?**

Concerns about speeding vehicles or cut-through traffic can be addressed by the City's Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP).

If your street qualifies for the NTMP, traffic calming measures such as speed humps or traffic circles can be considered for installation. These devices, and many others, have proved successful at reducing traffic speeds or the amount of cut-through traffic.

To learn more, contact the City at the telephone number or email address listed at the end of this document.

## **What harm would another stop sign do?**

When an excessive number of stop signs are installed or where the need to control right-of-way is doubtful, traffic congestion can increase with little or no gain in safety. In fact, safety could even be reduced.

Pedestrian and rear-end accidents also tend to increase, as the stop signs present a false sense of security.

Excessive use of stop signs also reduces the credibility of all stop signs, as many motorists become frustrated and either speed up after the stop sign or run through it. In some cases, stop sign violations can occur up to 25% of the time.

## **Where can stop signs be installed?**

Stop signs can be installed at entrances to certain through streets or where a stop sign warrant study indicates the need for a stop sign.

## **What is a stop sign warrant?**

Stop sign warrants are used to determine whether or not a stop sign should be installed. Warrants analyze:

- The number of vehicles at an intersection
- Accident history
- Vehicular and pedestrian conflicts
- Visibility
- Unusual conditions including:
  - High concentrations of pedestrians or vehicles.
  - Regular use of the intersection by children, the elderly or disabled.

## **What costs are involved with installing stop signs?**

The installation of a stop sign is inexpensive, but associated costs are not. The following costs must be considered before a stop sign is installed:

- Cost of the stop sign warrant study.
- Sign maintenance.
- Extra fuel consumed when cars accelerate after a stop sign.
- Air pollution increases as a result of increased fuel consumption.
- Residents living near stop signs experience increased air and noise pollution.

## **What else can be done?**

Often, simple solutions may improve a situation. The City may need to trim trees or bushes to uncover signs or to increase sight distances (on private property this is the responsibility of the property owner).

The Traffic Engineer may also be able to install warning signs near an intersection. However, if you believe there is a chronic traffic concern in your area, contact the Police Department at the number listed below.

## **Contact Information**

For more information on stop signs or other traffic related issues, contact the City Traffic Engineer or the Analyst for the Transportation Division at (650) 903-6311. You can also send an email to: [public.works@mountainview.gov](mailto:public.works@mountainview.gov).

To report missing or damaged traffic signs, call Public Services at (650) 903-6329.

If you would like to report traffic violations, contact the Police Department's Traffic Hotline at (650) 903-6146.

