



# STOP Signs

Transportation Division  
Department of Public Works

## Advantages of stop sign installation:

- Right of way assignment
- Controlled access to roadway
- Increased opportunities for pedestrians to cross roadway
- May discourage cut-through traffic

## Disadvantages:

- May create compliance problems where motorists do not acknowledge the need to stop
- Safety issues for pedestrians when compliance is poor
- Mid-block speeds may increase as motorists try to make up for lost time
- Increase in noise and air pollution
- May increase frequency of rear-end collisions
- May increase emergency response and ambulance transport times



## Speed Control:

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

## Reasons why stop signs are not a good speed control tool:

- Drivers are forced to come to a complete stop, even if they are going the speed limit
- Potential increase in rear-end collisions
- Drivers tend to increase speeds between stops
- Increased noise due to hard starts and stops and Increase in air pollution
- Decreased effectiveness of and compliance with warranted signs



## Installation Policies:

The Federal "Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices" (MUTCD) issued by the FHWA dictates the location, size, shape and color of all traffic signs. This manual has guidelines for installing signs and thus creates uniformity from state to state. The state of California has a Supplement to the MUTCD with additional requirements.

The City of Berkeley is required by state law to comply with the guidelines of the MUTCD and California Supplement. These policies identify specific traffic and pedestrian volumes, crash history and unusual conditions that would indicate the need to install stop signs.

## When do we install a stop sign?

Stop signs are installed only after a careful engineering evaluation of the existing conditions indicates that their installation is appropriate, and that there is a need for stop signs in order to provide access or assign right of way.

Overuse of stop signs reduces their effectiveness if installed where not justified.

