

STOP SIGNS: “HOW CAN WE GET THEM INSTALLED?”

STOP SIGN MYTHS

Myth No. 1 - Stop signs slow down traffic. Not so. Study after study, including sites in Tulare County, show that speeds only drop within about 1,000 feet of the stop sign. Further than 1,000 feet, speeds do not drop and often are found to actually increase. Drivers very soon realize the signs are not needed and view them as a nuisance.

Myth No. 2 - Stop signs reduce the number of collisions. Not so. Stop signs may reduce the number of right angle collisions, but rear end crashes may actually increase. Again, if not warranted, motorists view the stop as a nuisance and many will not come to a stop. When one driver expects another driver to stop, a collision could result.



Intersections may be either uncontrolled or controlled with yield signs, stop signs, or traffic signals. Stop controlled intersections may have stop signs on one approach (Tee), two approaches, or all approaches. In order to keep stop signs from being installed

on every intersection in the country, and to make their placement meaningful, the Federal Highway Administration and the California Department of Transportation have developed guidelines for the installation of stop signs. Tulare County follows these Federal and State guidelines - also known as warrants.



STOP SIGN WARRANTS

So, what are these guidelines, or warrants? In order to understand them, we need to first be aware of the purpose of stop signs. The primary reason for installing a stop sign is to assign right of way at intersections where the normal right of way rule does not work. This may be necessary if there are sight distance restrictions, if traffic volumes are so heavy that crossing vehicles experience long delays, or if a traffic collision history points to a problem where stop signs would be effective. They are not installed as speed control devices.

The warrants consider:

- Traffic volumes on the major and minor streets.
- Safe approach speed based on sight distance.
- Delay to minor street traffic.

- Number and type of traffic collisions.

Every stop sign request received by the Resource Management Agency is thoroughly investigated to determine if an installation would be justified. We look at the traffic collision patterns and history, we take traffic counts and measure vehicle speeds, we calculate sight distance, and if necessary we measure side street delay. Our recommendation is then developed based on sound traffic engineering principles and the State and Federal warrants.



HELP! Report damaged or missing STOP signs. Call 733-6291 or your local law enforcement agency.

Please don't delay or assume someone else will call. You could prevent an accident by calling to report missing or damaged STOP signs immediately.

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