

Stop Signs Requests

A common request to address speeding in neighborhoods is the installation of stop signs. The determination and need for the installation of a stop sign at an unsignalized intersection is typically based on guidance from the State of California *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)*, which is based on the federal document of the same name, but refined by Caltrans for use in California. Stop signs are appropriate at intersections for use in controlling traffic and defining right-of-way where vehicle or pedestrian volumes meet the minimum thresholds defined in the MUTCD. The MUTCD specifies that stop signs should NOT be used for speed control.

Stop signs may seem like an easy way to reduce vehicle speeds, however, stop signs used for traffic calming can actually create a less desirable situation. Stop signs that are used as a traffic-calming measure can cause a high incidence of drivers intentionally violating the required stop condition. This puts pedestrians and cross-traffic at risk. Additionally, inappropriate stop sign installation often results in an increase in rear-end collisions. When vehicles do stop, the speed reduction is often only effective in the immediate area, since motorists will then increase their speed to make up for lost time. This can result in increased mid-block speeds. Further, stopping and starting increases braking and engine noise; thus residents living near the stop will experience an increase in traffic noise. Stopping and idling at unwarranted stop signs also increase automobile exhaust and fuel consumption unnecessarily.