

Speed Control

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

Public understanding of the function of stop signs and traffic signals is one of the most critical elements in reducing speeding and traffic accidents. The following information explains our policies on intersection traffic controls and the correct use of stop signs and traffic signals.

Installation Policies

The Federal Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) dictates the 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 adopted the MUTCD and a California Supplement which contains additional requirements for California.

The City of Bakersfield, is required by State law to comply with the Federal MUTCD guidelines and the State Supplement to the MUTCD. These guidelines identify specific traffic and pedestrian volumes, accident history, and any unusual conditions, which must be present at the intersection, before these traffic control devices may be installed.

Stop Signs

Stop signs are installed at an intersection only after a careful engineering evaluation of the existing conditions indicates that their installation is appropriate.

Our 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. Many believe that forcing motorists to stop at each intersection will decrease overall speed on the road. However, studies show that stop signs only reduce

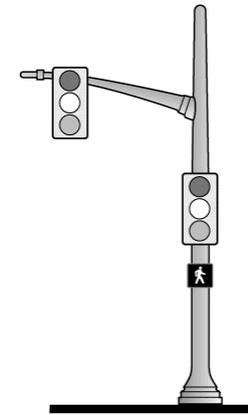


speed immediately adjacent to the sign. Most drivers accelerate between intersections to make up for time lost at the stop sign. Engineering studies indicate that the inappropriate installation of extra stop signs may cause additional problems such as more rear-end collisions, a redistribution of traffic onto side streets, and drivers ignoring the inappropriate stop signs.

Traffic Signals

The City has two types of traffic signals: fixed-time signals and traffic actuated signals. Fixed-time signals are set for average conditions and change at predetermined time intervals. Traffic actuated signals detect vehicles (including

bicycles) and adjust the timing to optimize traffic flow at the intersection.



Along major arterials which have several traffic signals spaced at periodic intervals, the traffic signals are usually synchronized to provide coordinated movement along the major street.

Before installing a traffic signal at an intersection, established minimum criteria must be satisfied.

Our review includes an examination of:

- The amount of vehicular and pedestrian traffic
- The need to provide interruption to the major flow for side street vehicles and pedestrians
- Special conditions such as hills and curves
- The accident history of the intersection

The City currently has nearly 300 signals and over the past five years, the City has been able to install 31 new traffic signals. These signals are installed and maintained using various funding sources, including developer fees and your gas tax dollars. A new traffic signal can typically cost in the range of \$100,000 to \$150,000. Therefore, their installation must be carefully considered.

Citizen Concerns

The City takes our role in solving traffic problems very seriously, yet the ultimate burden of safety rests with you, the motorist in Bakersfield. Although we receive over 200 citizen requests per year, we try to investigate your request as quickly as work load permits. We will respond after carefully evaluating your request. We appreciate your patience and understanding.

Other Traffic Information Brochures Available

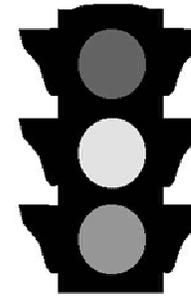
Left Turn Traffic Signals
Marked Crosswalks
Neighborhood Traffic Safety
School Routes
Speed Bumps
Speed Limits
Traffic Signal Systems



Latest Revision 03/08/05



*Stop
Signs*



&

*Traffic
Signals*



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