

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
OF
“STOP” SIGNS AND SPEED STUDY

An Explanation of the General Inability of Unwarranted “Stop” Signs
to Enhance Public Safety

A common misconception is that “Stop” signs are a logical method by which to control speeding. In reality, however, unwarranted “Stop” signs rarely yield the anticipated benefits and often serve only to create additional problems at the intersection in question. As a result of a four-month study conducted by the Department’s Traffic Division on the use of “Stop” signs as a speed control measure, their observations led to the following conclusions:

1. Vehicular speeds are reduced only in the immediate vicinity (300 feet) of unwarranted “Stop” signs.
2. The installation of unwarranted “Stop” signs can actually increase the prevailing speed of motorists. Generally speaking, higher approach and departing speeds were recorded after “Stop” signs were installed. This increase in speed is caused by motorists “making up for lost time” after making an unwarranted stop.
3. The frequency of rear-end type collisions is likely to increase at intersections under stop control.
4. Unwarranted “Stop” signs are ignored by many drivers, who, rather than coming to a complete stop, execute a “rolling” stop. This creates a hazard and a false sense of security for other motorists and pedestrians who rightfully expect full compliance and complete obedience to the posted “Stop” signs.
5. Acceleration and deceleration in the vicinity of unwarranted “Stop” signs cause increased fuel consumption, air pollution and noise pollution.
6. Unwarranted “Stop” signs cause substantial inconvenience and delay to motorists.
7. The best method of controlling motorists’ speed is the posting of a reasonable speed limit, followed by surveillance and strict police enforcement.
8. Motorists typically travel at speeds which they believe to be safe, prudent and comfortable, regardless of the posted speed limit.

To obtain a copy of this study, please contact the Department’s Operations Division at (314) 615-1123.