



WHY DOESN'T THE CITY PUT IN MORE "STOP" SIGNS?

A "STOP" sign is one of our most valuable and effective devices when used at the right place and under the right conditions. The basic purpose of "STOP" signs is to assign right-of-way at intersections – to indicate to drivers and pedestrians who has the right-of-way.

Because the "STOP" sign causes a substantial inconvenience to motorists, it should be used only where warranted. By policy and by law Hutchinson follows the recognized National Standard for the installation of all traffic control devices including "STOP" signs. Sections of that National Standard regarding "STOP" signs can be summarized as follows:

TWO-WAY STOP – is used to protect traffic on one of two intersecting streets by requiring traffic on the other street to come to a complete stop and is suitable under the following conditions:

1. Where the protected street is a major street.
2. Where sight distances approaching the intersection are substandard and the general right-of-way rule is unsafe.
3. Where there is a record of an accident pattern correctable by right-of-way controls.

MULTI-WAY STOP – is intended primarily where two collector or major streets intersect, where traffic volumes are approximately equal, and where any of the following conditions are met:

1. Where traffic signals are warranted, the multi-way "STOP" is an interim measure.
2. Where there is a documented accident problem as indicated by five or more accidents in a 12 month period of a type susceptible to correction by a multi-way "STOP".
3. Where the average total vehicular volume entering the intersection from all approaches is at least 500 vehicles per hour for any 8 hours of an average day, and the combined vehicular and pedestrian volume from the minor street must average at least 200 per hour for the same 8 hours.

One common misuse of "STOP" signs is to arbitrarily interrupt through traffic. "STOP" signs are regularly requested by citizens with expectations that they will control speeds or reduce volume in residential neighborhoods. Studies both locally and nationally have shown that this is not the case. The speed reduction is only effective in the immediate vicinity of the "STOP" sign and frequently speeds are actually higher between intersections.

While most drivers are reasonable and prudent, any device can be ignored or circumvented by a determined motorist, and unwarranted or unreasonable signs may result in flagrant violations. In the case where unwarranted "STOP" signs are used as "speed breakers", they instill a false sense of security in the neighborhood and an attitude of contempt or disrespecting passing motorists – a dangerous combination. For all of the above reasons, "STOP" signs are not used as speed control devices.