



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY MULTI-WAY STOPS

Multi-way stop control can be useful as a safety measure at intersections if certain traffic conditions exist. Safety concerns associated with multi-way stops include pedestrians, bicyclists and all road users expecting other road users to stop. Multi-way stop control is used where the volume of traffic on the intersection roads is approximately equal. The County follows the criteria established by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

➤ Multi-Way STOP Sign Installation Requirements

The decision to install multi-way stops is based on a traffic engineering study. Criteria for the installation of a multi-way stop sign include:

- Multi-way stops can be used as an interim measure when traffic signals are justified.
- Five or more reported crashes in a 12-month period, that are susceptible to correction by a multi-way stop installation.
- For any 8-hours of an average day, there needs to be a minimum volume: 300 units (vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians) per hour on the major street and 200 units per hour on the minor street. In addition, there are delay and street traffic adjustments such as an average delay on the minor street of 30 seconds per vehicle during the highest hour. This is adjusted if major street traffic exceeds 40 miles per hour and volume warrants are 70% of the above values.
- Other considerations in a traffic engineering study include:
(1) The need to control left-turn conflicts; (2) Vehicle/pedestrian conflicts or locations near high pedestrian volumes; (3) Locations where a driver cannot see conflicting traffic, even when stopped; (4) An intersection of two neighborhood collector through streets of similar design and where the installation of a multi-way stop would improve the operational characteristics; and 5) Where the approach volume from all directions is almost evenly distributed and not drastically different from the main line movement.

➤ STOP Signs for Are Not Effective for Speed Control

While it is a common belief that placement of STOP signs will slow traffic down, stop signs should not be used to control speed.

- When stop signs are placed at unwarranted locations, they encourage drivers to make decisions based on their emotions (their comfort level while driving on the roadway or just wanting to get wherever they were headed) instead of their intellect (understanding the laws of the signs they see on the roadway). Stop signs that are not warranted may increase the potential for rear-end type crashes.
- Unwarranted multi-way stops cause problems with the need for even more traffic enforcement; increased traffic noise and poor driver behavior (such as speeding away from the intersection to "make up time"); and liability issues of justifying in court the placement of a STOP sign that was not warranted.
- Most people believe that additional stop signs in their neighborhood will help slow down traffic and provide a safer environment for pedestrians and motorists. Unfortunately, it simply is not the solution in most cases. Historically, the majority of speeders in a neighborhood are the people who live in that area and are comfortable driving on those roads.

➤ Frequently Asked Questions This Factsheet Addresses

Many people ask our engineers to consider their neighborhood as a “special case.” The County must treat each neighborhood equally as all neighborhoods have the same concerns and needs.

- Why aren't there 4-way stop controls at every intersection?
- Why was a 4-way stop changed to a 2-way stop?
- How can we get a 4-way stop near our house?
- Who can I talk to? Contact the Traffic Engineering and Safety Division or submit your service request, visit [County Click 311](#)

The Prince George's County's roadway network includes more than 2,000 miles of public streets.

OUR GOAL: The RIGHT TREATMENT at the RIGHT TIME

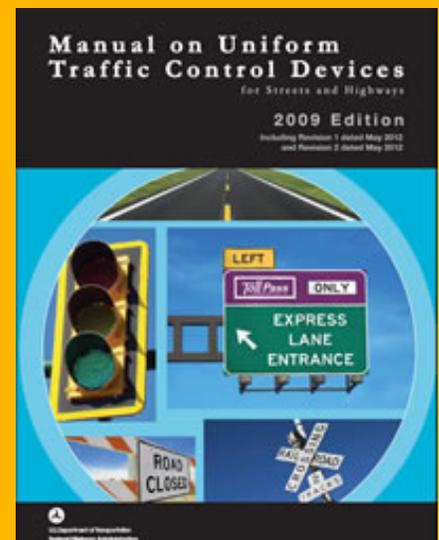
Projects hinge on input received from community members and an objective analysis of the existing field conditions and constraints. For general questions or comments, contact the Traffic Engineering and Safety Division at 301-883-5642.

➤ Resources

The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways, or MUTCD defines the standards used by road managers nationwide to install and maintain traffic control devices on all public streets, highways, bikeways, and private roads open to public travel.

Published by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
<https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/>

The Department of Public Works and Transportation's [Traffic Management Program Guidelines](#)



The Department of Public Works and Transportation is proud to implement cost-effective, durable and innovative infrastructure improvements and maintenance throughout Prince George's County. Our mission is to provide and maintain quality multi-modal infrastructure to improve mobility, promote environmental sustainability, and enhance the quality of life for current and future Prince George's County residents and visitors.

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