



Information on Multi-Way Stops



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?

Where Multi-Way STOP Control Can Be Useful

Beaufort County is required to use the **Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)**, which states that: “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.”

Criteria for a Multi-Way STOP Sign Installation

The decision to install multi-way stops is based on a traffic engineering study. The **MUTCD** gives the following criteria for a multi-way stop sign installation:

- A. Multi-way stops can be used as an interim measure when traffic signals are justified.
- B. Five or more reported crashes in a 12-month period, that are susceptible to correction by a multi-way stop installation.
- C. For any 8-hours of an average day, a minimum volume of 300 Units (vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians) per hour on the major street and a minimum volume of 200 Units per hour on the minor street, with an average delay on the minor street of 30 seconds per vehicle during the highest hour. If major street traffic exceeds 40 mph, volume warrants are 70% of the above values.

Other criteria that are considered in an 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; and (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.

STOP Signs for Speed Control

While it is a common belief that placement of STOP signs will slow traffic down, the **MUTCD** states that 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). 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 wasn't warranted.

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.

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.

Want More Information?

This flyer is for general purposes only. For more information, please contact the Beaufort County Traffic & Transportation Engineering Department at (843) 255-2940 or [click here](#)

NOTE: The **MUTCD** is used throughout the country as the standard by which traffic control decisions are made. The complete **MUTCD** can be found at: http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009r1r2/pdf_index.htm