City of Compton

Stop Sign Installation Policy and Procedures

Adopted by the City Council on January 26, 2021

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INTRODUCTION

This policy is intended to establish a set of guidelines for the purpose of evaluating requests for stop signs in the City of Compton. Standard practice for local government agencies in California is to base stop sign analyses on the guidelines in the California *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (CA MUTCD), which is based on federal guidelines. These state guidelines, however, tend to be directed toward arterial streets, and do not necessarily take into account the different circumstances in residential areas. As a result, intersections in residential areas often do not meet the state and federal guidelines to install stop signs due to their lower traffic volumes and fewer traffic collisions. This policy is intended to supplement the CA MUTCD guidelines for the installation of stop signs by specifically addressing a variety of situations with straightforward criteria. The California Vehicle Code sections 21351, 21354 and 21355 provide the authority for a local agency to place and maintain stop signs on local streets including designating any intersection under its jurisdiction as a stop intersection and to erect stop signs at one or more entrances. The policies presented are intended to reflect the needs of the local community for additional right-of-way assignment while retaining the integrity of the use of stop signs through their judicious use.

POLICY FOR THE INSTALLATION OF STOP SIGNS

General Considerations

Stop signs are used to establish right-of-way at an intersection, thereby, reducing delays and decreasing collisions. The installation of stop signs or other traffic control devices must be based upon a documented need for vehicle control. Documenting the need for stop sign installation shall incorporate the warrants established by the State of California in the CA MUTCD, and the criteria set forth in this policy.

Satisfaction of a warrant is not a guarantee that a stop sign is needed. Nor is the fact that a warrant is not satisfied an assurance that stop sign control would not be beneficial. With the warrants serving as the basis for evaluation, sound engineering judgment and all pertinent facts should be considered in decisions related to the installation of stop signs.

When being considered, it should be noted that stop signs can create unnecessary vehicular stops, increased delay, and add to fuel consumption and air pollution if used improperly. The installation of stop signs can also increase undesirable noise in residential neighborhoods, create an illusion of safety and result in increased disregard for traffic controls.

Additionally, stop signs are generally not considered effective speed control devices on local streets, in fact, the CA MUTCD specifically states that stop signs should not be used for speed control. Rather, stop signs are intended to assign right-of-way to traffic. This is a common misconception, as people often believe stop signs will help to control speeds.
The CA MUTCD also directs that less-restrictive measures should be considered before installing all-way stop controls. These measures include red curb or the removal of foliage or objects to improve corner sight distance, and using yield signs instead of stop signs.

Special Considerations

In certain cases, conditions may exist that are not adequately addressed by the criteria presented hereafter. In these cases, special consideration should be given to the applicability of stop sign controls to the intersection. Examples of conditions warranting special consideration include:

1. Extreme pedestrian visibility problems.
2. Where a traffic signal installation may be under consideration but not yet approved.
3. A street that is in close proximity to a school, fire department, church, park or any area of high public use.
4. Steep curves or inclines that could be considered an additional restriction to visibility
5. Other considerations as may be deemed appropriate by engineering or technical studies.

A list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) is provided in Attachment A.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Initially, each request for stop signs will be evaluated using the CA MUTCD criteria. If, however, the intersection does not meet the CA MUTCD criteria, the intersection will then be evaluated using the separate special criteria to address residential neighborhood and local street situations versus locations along arterial roadways. The analysis forms for one-way / two-way stops and all-way stops are attached.

The following provides definitions of various types of roadways and intersections as well as the special criteria for the evaluation of intersections within the City of Compton for stop sign control.

Types of Roadways

Two different terms are used to describe roadways in the context of these guidelines. The following definitions apply:

Local Street – This term refers to a roadway that carries relatively low volumes of traffic and is not considered an arterial street. This classification includes those streets that meet strict residential street definitions (per the California Vehicle Code) and streets that do not meet this strict definition but are not included in the City's arterial street system.

Arterial Street – Refers to the functional classification of the roadway based on the General Plan designation of the roadway. All of the following roadways are considered to be arterials in increasing functional order: collector arterial, minor arterial, major arterial and principal arterial.

Types of Intersections

There are several types of intersections where stop signs can be installed, as follows:

3-Legged or "T" Intersection – An intersection typically comprised of one through street and a terminating street. Often the terminating street is referred to as "the stem of the T". In this case, typically only one-way stops (stopping traffic approaching on the terminating street) and all-way stops are considered.

4-Legged Intersection (Arterial Street/Local Street) – An intersection generally comprised of a major through street (typically a collector arterial or higher arterial) and a minor intersecting street. In this case, typically only two-way stops (stopping traffic on the minor street approaches) are considered.

4-Legged Intersection (Local Street/Local Street) – An intersection generally comprised of two minor streets with neither street necessarily considered a through street. In this case, typically either two-way or all-way stops are often considered.

Intersections With More Than 4 legs – A special case location that generally has more than two streets intersecting at the same point. This type of intersection often requires unique analysis to evaluate the conditions and provide appropriate recommendations. Specific criteria for this situation are not included in this policy in recognition of the special circumstances.

Special Criteria for Consideration of Stop Controls

Listed below are additional criteria that can be considered for installing stop signs if an intersection does not meet the CA MUTCD guidelines.

One-way Stop Control (T-Intersections)

If any one of the following criteria is satisfied, a one-way stop should be considered:

1. (Local/Local) On the terminating street at its intersection with a through street where application of the normal right-of-way rule is unduly hazardous as evidenced by collisions susceptible to correction with stop signs.
2. On a city street at its intersection with a state highway (State responsibility).

3. On a street where the safe approach speed to the intersection is less than 10 miles per hour.

Two-way Stop Control (4 or More Legged Intersections)

If the following criterion is satisfied, a two-way stop control should be considered:

1. Either one of the total peak hour intersection volumes exceeds 100 vehicles

All-way Stop Control (3 or More Legged Intersections)

All-way stop control is most effective when applied to intersecting streets with close to equal traffic volumes. Special consideration should be given to locations that have significant unusual visibility or physical conditions. All-way stops should only be installed after all less restrictive methods of traffic control or modifications are deemed ineffective or unfeasible. All streets considered should have as close to equal traffic volumes as possible. Generally, 4-legged intersections should have no less than a 60/40 split and 3-legged intersections no less than a 70/30 split.

If any one of the following criteria is satisfied, an all-way stop should be considered:

1. Volume Warrant – Local Streets
    a. Total vehicular volume entering the intersection from all approaches must average 180 vehicles per hour for any 8 hours of an average day: and,
    b. The combined vehicular, pedestrian and bicyclist volume entering the intersection from the minor street for the same 8 hours must average at least 72 units per hour.
2. Any unusual physical or geometric conditions that cannot be effectively addressed by less restrictive methods.

PROCEDURE FOR THE INSTALLATION OF STOP SIGNS

The City typically follows the steps below for a request to install stop signs:

1. To initiate the process, a person submits a request for stop signs to the City, preferably using the City's Request for Traffic Control form, which is attached, or can be obtained on the City's website at www.comptoncity.org/depts/pw/docs.asp. The request can also be submitted directly to the Engineering Department, at contactpw@comptoncity.org or (310) 605-5505. The request should include the following information:
    a. Intersection street names.
    b. Type of stop signs desired: 1-way stop, 2-way stop or All-way stop.
    c. Reason for request, including what their concerns are, what they have witnessed and the days/times it typically occurs, how often it occurs, and how stop signs would address their concerns.

   d. Contact information, including name, email address and phone number. To inform the requestor of the results of the study and, if needed, for more details about their concern.

2. The City will review the request and contact the requestor if any additional information is needed.
3. The City will conduct a field review of the intersection, noting the existing traffic controls and any unusual conditions, including restricted intersection sight distance due to trees, bushes, fences, signs, etc.
4. The City will collect traffic collision data and traffic counts, and prepare sight distance diagrams, as needed.
5. The City will assess the intersection with the various stop sign warrants. The initial assessment will use the CA MUTCD warrants. If the intersection does not meet these warrants, it will be assessed with the City's guidelines. These assessments will determine the following:
   a. If other less-restrictive measures should be taken.
   b. If a stop sign(s) should be installed.
   c. If other safety measures should also be taken.
6. Based on the findings, a recommendation will be made to the City Engineer. The requestor will be notified of the City Engineer's decision to approve or deny the request.
7. If the City Engineer approves the stop sign installation, Public Works will install the approved sign(s). Any other approved actions will also be implemented.
8. The City Council will be notified of the approval or denial of any request.

City of Compton
Public Works Department Engineering Department

Request for Traffic Control Device
(Stop Sign, Traffic Signal, Speed Humps, Crosswalk)

1. Applicant:

Name:

Business Name (if applicable):

Address:

Zip Code: | Daytime Phone Number:

Email Address:

2. Request:

a. Check the type of traffic control you are requesting:

- ☐ Stop Sign(s)[1]
- ☐ Speed Humps/Speed Cushion[2]
- ☐ Other[3]: _____
- ☐ Traffic Signal
- ☐ Crosswalk/Flashing Beacon

b. Street/Intersection: _____

*[1] See the City of Compton Stop Sign Installation Policy and Procedures, available online**
*[2] See the City of Compton Speed Hump Policy and Procedures, available online**
*[3] For parking restrictions (blue, red, green, yellow or white curb), use the Applicaton for On-Street Accessible Parking for Disabled Persons or the Application for Curb Marking (Red, Green, Yellow & White), available online**
** Policies and applications are available online at www.comptoncity.org.*

4. Traffic Concerns:

a. Indicate the traffic concern(s) you would like addressed:

- ☐ Speeding
- ☐ Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety
- ☐ Mobility Restrictions
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Traffic Collisions
- ☐ Reduced Visibility
- ☐ School-Related Traffic Safety
- ☐ Traffic Volumes

Briefly describe your concerns below *(attach supplemental sheet if necessary).* Attach any photos or documents that illustrate your concerns.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please return completed application to:

City of Compton
Attention: Public Works Engineering Department
205 South Willlowbrook Avenue
Compton, CA 90220

Or email to: contactPW@comptoncity.org | For more information, call: (310) 605-5505

Office Use Only

Date Received: _____

Comments: _____

Attachment A

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the primary reason for stop signs?

The purpose of a stop sign is to control who has the right-of-way at an intersection. Stop signs should only be installed where they are needed.

What is the City of Compton's policy for installing a stop sign?

Traffic control devices, such as stop signs, are regulated by state and national standards to provide uniform traffic control both statewide and nationally. State and federal guidelines for when these devices should be installed are called warrants and consider traffic factors such as speed, number of vehicles, number of pedestrians, and crash history. The California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD) is a state-specific version of the Federal MUTCD. The City of Compton, by state law, must comply with the guidelines in the CA MUTCD.

The City's stop sign policy is based on the CA MUTCD, however, since the CA MUTCD is more focused on arterial streets, the City has developed additional guidelines in the stop warrant for local streets with lower traffic volumes and speeds. The City's policy includes stop warrants for one-way/two-way stops and for all-way stop control. Stop signs are installed at an intersection only if a careful evaluation of the existing conditions indicates their installation is appropriate.

Why not use stop signs to control speeding?

The City receives regular requests to install stop signs to slow traffic. The CA MUTCD, however, expressly prohibits the use of stop signs to control speed. Decades of experience have shown that using stop signs to control speeding does not bring the desired results. When stop signs are used to slow speeding, drivers tend to increase their speed between stops to compensate for lost time. When Stop signs are improperly used, drivers often screech into and out of a stop sign, and may roll through the stop signs, making the intersection less safe. Unwarranted stop signs are more likely to be ignored by motorists and have been found to lead to increased collisions.

There are other ways to reduce speeding. The City has a speed hump policy, which includes not only speed humps, but other, less restrictive options to reduce speeding. A copy of the City's *Speed Hump Policy and Procedures* can be obtained from the City's Department of Public Works, Engineering Division, at contactpw@comptoncity.org or on the City's website at .

Where can I get more information?

Please refer to the City of Compton's *Stop Sign Installation Policy and Procedures*, which can be obtained from the City's Department of Public Works, Engineering Division, at contactpw@comptoncity.org or on the City's website at www.comptoncity.org/depts/pw/docs.asp.

Who do I contact to request a stop sign?

Any citizen may request the installation of a stop sign, as follows:

1. Use the City of Compton App (download from an app store and search for "Compton"), OR
2. Use the Request for Traffic Control form, which is attached to the City's *Stop Sign Installation Policy and Procedures*. The request form can also be downloaded from the City's website at www.comptoncity.org/depts/pw/docs.asp, OR
3. Through the City's Department of Public Works, Engineering Division at (310) 605-5505 or at contactpw@comptoncity.org.

How are stop sign requests prioritized?

In general, requests for stop signs are handled in the order they are received. Should the City Engineer determine, however, that a particular request has greater-than-normal safety concerns, the request will be given top priority. Stop sign requests may also be handled concurrently, with the time to complete each request dependent on factors such as availability of information and required coordination with the applicant, or other agencies or jurisdictions.

Typically, stop signs will be installed when the intersection has met the stop sign warrant and a work order for installation is prepared. It is not anticipated that multiple intersections would qualify for the installation of stop signs at the same time, however, should this occur, stop signs would be installed in order of greatest safety need, as determined by the City Engineer.

How much does it cost to install stop signs?

The cost to install one stop sign is approximately $150.00, including the stop bar and pavement legend. Each additional stop sign at an intersection would increase the cost by the same amount, i.e. installing two stop signs would cost approximately $300.00.