

# City of Moreno Valley Public Works Department

## (Q)UESTIONS AND (A)NSWERS FOR EVERYDAY TRAFFIC OPERATIONS IN THE CITY OF MORENO VALLEY

### **Q1: WE HAVE MOTORISTS SPEEDING ON OUR CITY STREETS. HOW CAN YOU HELP US WITH THIS PROBLEM?**

**A1:** Speeding is a behavioral issue that comes out of the demand of our increasingly busy lives. People often drive faster from their homes to their destinations and vice versa. The City's Public Works Department receives several hundred complaints each year from concerned citizens regarding speeding, especially on their residential streets.

The City of Moreno Valley implements the following actions to respond to speeding complaints:

- The City has implemented the use of a PARET unit (Public Awareness Radar Educational Trailer) to remind motorists of their responsibility to drive safely. The trailer displays the speed at which a vehicle is traveling in contrast with the posted speed limit for the zone. These units have been proven to be effective in reducing vehicular speeds in many areas. and;
- The City works with the Moreno Valley Police Department to provide selective speed enforcement in different areas of the City. However, limited resources prevent them from targeting all areas at all times.

### **Q2: CAN THE CITY INSTALL SPEED HUMPS ON MY STREET?**

**A2:** Speeding on residential streets is a common complaint reported by concerned citizens throughout the City. The city's Traffic Management Program provides for the installation of speed humps on certain streets. Speed humps are one of the most requested traffic calming improvements for residential streets. They are designed to warn drivers to slow down and are effective in reducing driving speeds. They are not the same as the speed bumps you encounter in parking lots; those have a higher profile and are designed for traffic that is already going less than 25mph.

Speed Humps are a gradual hump with a height of 4 inches and length of 12 feet. They are installed in conjunction with advance warning signs warning and pavement markings.

### **Q3: CAN THE CITY LOWER THE SPEED LIMIT ON A PARTICULAR ROADWAY?**

**A3:** State law requires local agencies to establish speed limits based on Engineering and Traffic Surveys (ETS). The City of Moreno Valley conducts speed surveys throughout the City and speed limits are set accordingly. These surveys include an analysis of roadway conditions, collision records, and a sampling of the prevailing speed of traffic. The prevailing speed is determined by measuring existing speeds of motorists during free-flow (typically off-peak) within the respective zone. Speed limits are set the nearest 5mph increment to which 85 percent of drivers are traveling.

Speed limits set above the prevailing speed are generally considered unreasonable and unsafe. Conversely, speed limits set below the prevailing speed do not provide for the orderly movements of traffic. Lowering the speed limit more than what is considered appropriate is counterproductive and could lead to a lack of police enforcement. Traffic flowing at a uniform speed will generally result in increased safety and fewer collisions.

Citizens often request that the speed limit be lower than 25 mph on residential streets in an effort to slow traffic. The 25-mph speed limit on residential streets is established by State law and set

automatically based on conditions defined in the California Vehicle Code. This speed limit, which is often referred to as "prima facie" limit does not require posting signs for enforcement. If the speed limit on residential streets is lowered more than the prima facie limit, drivers will ignore it and will continue to drive at a speed they feel is safe and reasonable. Other prima facie speed limits include the 25-mph speed limit in a business district, 25-mph in school zones when children are present, and 15-mph in alleys.

#### **Q4: HOW CAN I GET A SPEED LIMIT SIGN ON MY STREET?**

**A4:** In California, the maximum speed limit for passenger cars, trucks and all vehicles towing trailers is 55 mph. However, selected freeways in rural areas may be posted to permit a maximum of 65 mph for passenger cars only. These are absolute limits, which may not be legally exceeded under any circumstances.

All other speed limits are called prima facie limits ("on the face of it") which are deemed reasonable and prudent under normal conditions.

A few prima facie limits are established by the vehicle code, including 15 mph in alleys, at blind intersections and at blind railroad crossings, and 25 mph in business and residence districts. Sign posting is not required for these prima facie zones. There is also a part-time 25mph prima facie limit in posted school zones when children are going to and from school.

Most prima facie limits are established by State and local authorities who are permitted to set speed limits between 25 and 55 on the basis of an Engineering and Traffic Survey. For these prima facie limits, sign posting is required.

#### **Q5: CAN I GET "CHILDREN AT PLAY" SIGNS INSTALLED ON MY STREET?**

**A5:** Children at Play" signs and similar signs are not recognized by the State of California or by the Federal Highway Administration as an official traffic control device and therefore, are not installed by the City on public streets.

Many people believe that "CHILDREN AT PLAY" signs and similar signs, such as "SLOW," or "SLOW ENTERING RESIDENTIAL AREA," enhance the children's safety, but may not realize that there are many safety concerns about the use of these signs.

"Children at Play" signs send the wrong message to our younger citizens by encouraging them to play within the street. The City discourages this behavior, as a pedestrian's interaction with automobiles could result in severe traffic safety consequences. In addition, "Children at Play" signs can create a false belief for children by letting them assume they are safer where signs are installed. Such signs have been proven to be ineffective in providing added protection for children, and the signs' presence could negatively affect the children's safety on our streets.

The City provides many neighborhood parks where children can play safely with proper supervision. In addition, the City has many other recreational opportunities for the public, including the Sports Complex and dedicated bike lanes/trails.

#### **Q6: HOW DO I REQUEST AN ADULT SCHOOL CROSSING GUARD?**

**A6:** All requests for adult crossing guards go through the following process:

- The request for a crossing guard is submitted to the school principal.
- The school principal determines if the request for a study is warranted.
- The principal forwards the "Request for Crossing Guard Warrant Study" to the school district.

- The school district approves and forwards the “Request for Crossing Guard Warrant Study” to the City of Moreno Valley Transportation Engineering Division.
- The City’s Transportation Division conducts a traffic study based upon State established criteria.
- If a guard is warranted, a recommendation is made to the City Council authorizing the new position.

The City’s Transportation Division hire, trains, equips, and supervises all Crossing Guards.

**Q7: CAN I REQUEST A CROSSWALK?**

**A7:** A crosswalk is the portion of a roadway at an intersection that is the extension of the sidewalk and curbs lines of the intersecting streets, or is any other portion of a roadway marked as a pedestrian crossing by painted lines. Crosswalks are either “marked or unmarked”, as defined by the California Vehicle Code (CVC). A marked crosswalk is delineated by white or yellow painted markings placed on the pavement. In general, the city does not paint or mark crosswalks at locations where traffic is not controlled by stop signs or traffic signals.

**Q8: CAN YOU INSTALL A STOP SIGN TO REDUCE SPEEDING?**

**A8:** The City often receives inquiries about installing a stop sign at intersections as a way to reduce speeding in residential neighborhoods. Stop signs however, are installed to regulate traffic flow and assign vehicle Right-of-Way.

The City uses the California Manual on Traffic Control Devices (CA. MUTCD) criteria for installing a stop sign at intersections. Any of the following conditions may warrant a multi-way stop sign installation:

- When the total vehicular volume entering the intersection from all approaches averages at least 500 vehicles per hour for any eight-hour period of an average day, and the combined vehicular and pedestrian volume from the minor street averages at least 200 units per hour for the same eight hours.
- When five or more collisions of the type correctable by a multi-way stop installation occur within a 12-month period. Such collisions include right- and left-turn collisions, as well as right-angle collisions.

The City does not typically use stop signs at T-intersections in residential areas. The right-of-way at T intersections is addressed in the California Vehicle Code, which requires that motorists on the T-leg yield to motorists on the through roadway. Stop signs are generally used on the minor leg of a T-intersection only if there is significant traffic volume on the through street.

**Q9: HOW ARE TRAFFIC SIGNALS INSTALLED?**

**A9:** Citizens can request the installation of a traffic signal at a particular intersection. Traffic engineers follow certain State guidelines and criteria called “warrants” to evaluate the intersection for a signal installation. If the intersection meets the warrants, it is then added to a list of other qualified intersections in the City. The City has established an annual signal priority program, which determines the need for signalization on City intersections. The program provides a ranking system among the intersections that meet the signal warrant criteria, and is then approved by the City Council. The ranking system is based upon various traffic data, such as traffic and pedestrian volumes, collision history, speeds, delays, intersection configuration, proximity to signalized intersections, schools and senior citizens residents, and relevant site-specific factors. The cost of a traffic signal is approximately \$200,000 per intersection and more than \$3,000 a year for maintenance and energy costs.

**Q10: CAN YOU COORDINATE THE SIGNALS ALONG A PARTICULAR ARTERIAL?**

**A10:** Traffic signal coordination is a method of timing groups of traffic signals along an arterial to provide efficient movement of traffic with minimal stops. The quality of the resulting progression is a function of the spacing of the signals, the prevailing speeds, the amount of traffic coming in and out of driveways between traffic signals, the uniformity of intersection sizes, and the cycle length.

Traffic signal coordination occurs when a group of two or more traffic signals are working together so that cars moving through the group will make the least number of stops possible. Each traffic signal is set up with a fixed amount of time, also known as a cycle, which is divided among all the directions. By having all signals in a group running the same cycle, it then becomes possible to "line up" the green lights for one direction. The way the green lights "line up" depends on the distance between traffic signals and the speed of the traffic.

Many major arterials in Moreno Valley are coordinated, however, where these arterials intersect, Engineers need to balance the amount of green time in accordance with the nature of traffic flow during peak hours.

The major arterial streets coordinated in the City include:

- Frederick Street
- Heacock Street
- Perris Boulevard
- Cactus Avenue
- Alessandro Boulevard
- Sunnymead Boulevard
- Ironwood Avenue

**Q11: I CANNOT SEE THE ONCOMING TRAFFIC AT A PARTICULAR INTERSECTION. CAN YOU HELP?**

**A11:** Traffic Engineering staff usually conduct a field study in the area adjacent to a particular intersection where there is a visibility concern, to determine whether or not sight distance standards are met. As part of the study, staff checks collision records for the location for a recent 12-month.

In all cases, motorists should exercise caution when leaving private property or a side street. The California Vehicle Code states that motorists entering a highway from public or private property shall yield the right-of-way to all traffic on the highway and shall continue to do so until he or she can proceed with reasonable safety. Motorists should move forward, thus gaining more visibility to exit the driveway or side street.

**Q12: CAN I PAINT THE CURB RED AND INSTALL MY OWN TRAFFIC SIGNS ON MY STREET?**

**A12:** Traffic signs and markings shall be placed on public streets only by public authorities or officials having jurisdiction, for the purpose of regulating, warning, or guiding traffic. The City installs red curb/no-stopping signs, or other traffic signs and markings after careful examination for their needs and impact on City streets. All signs or curb markings in the public right-of-way must be installed by the City or with the City's approval. If these signs are not done by the City or without City approval, they are illegal and cannot be enforced. Any unauthorized sign placed on the highway right-of-way by private organizations or individuals constitute a public nuisance and will be removed.

**Q13: CAN THE CITY PAINT THE CURB RED IN FRONT OF FIRE HYDRANTS?**

**A13:** The subject of parking next to fire hydrants is addressed in the California Vehicle Code (CVC) in Section 22514, which states, "No person shall stop, park, or leave standing any vehicle within 15 feet of a fire hydrant..."

Since the CVC already states that it is illegal to park within 15 feet of a fire hydrant, whether or not there are signs or red curb, the City typically does not designate the area in front of a fire hydrant as a no-stopping zone.

If there is a pattern of repeated violations by motorists parking next to particular fire hydrants, it can be addressed by increased enforcement by the Moreno Valley Police Department.

**Q14: WHAT IS THE TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE?**

**A14:** This is a committee that meets the first Wednesday of every month to discuss traffic issues raised by residents or City staff. The meetings are held to determine the best course of action to improve a traffic-related issue. Recommendations from the committee are sent to the City Council for approval or denial. These meetings are open to the public, and everyone is encouraged to attend.