

## **Traffic Sign FAQ's**

### **1. What are traffic signs?**

The functions of traffic signs are to provide regulations, warnings, and guidance information to road users, words, symbols, and arrows are used to convey the messages. There are three main classifications of signs;

- Regulatory - which give notice of traffic laws and regulations
- Warning Signs – which give notice of a situation that might not be readily apparent
- Guide Signs – which show route designations, destination, directions, distance, services, points of interest, and other geographical, recreational, or cultural information.

The City of Saratoga Springs, by state law, must comply with the standards, guidance and options of the National Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and New York State Supplement for the installation and maintenance of traffic control devices.

### **2. There is a missing, knocked down, damaged or defaced traffic sign, who do I notify?**

For knocked down or missing Stop signs, Do Not Enter signs, Oneway signs, Wrong Way signs, Speed Limit signs, Weight Limit signs, Height Limit signs, or traffic warning signs please call the Saratoga Springs Police Department non-emergency number (518)584-1800.

For all other sign types or issues please reported by filling out the [Traffic Watch](#) request form located on the City Web Site under the [Public Safety Department](#) web page.

### **3. Can I put up my own traffic sign?**

No, it is not permitted for a resident to install a traffic sign along a public street. This is a violation of New York State Vehicle and [Traffic Law section 1114](#) - Display of unauthorized signs, signals, or markings. Any such sign will be removed by city forces without notice.

### **4. Can I take down or move a traffic sign that I do not want in front of my house?**

No, it is not permitted for a resident to take down or move a traffic sign. This is a violation of New York State Vehicle and [Traffic Law section 1115](#) - Interference with official traffic-control devices.

### **5. There are children living along my neighborhood street, can we have a “Children at Play” sign installed?**

The City no longer approves the installation of Children at Play signs on residential streets. This is not to say there aren't some existing signs in the community that have been allowed to remain until the end of the sign service life at which time they will be removed.

The Children at Play sign does not exist in the National MUTCD list of approved signs, however it still remains in the current version of the New York State Supplement. The State Supplement states; “Use of the Children at Play sign should be limited to locations where, because of unusual conditions, motorists might not expect children playing in the vicinity of the roadway. The

Children at Play sign should not be used on highways where obvious residential development alerts motorists to the possibility of children at play”.

Transportation professionals nationwide have argued that there is no evidence indicating this sign reduces traffic speed. Arguments include the sign conveys a false sense of security to children and parents, promotes children playing in or near the street, and if the sign is used on some residential streets and not all residential streets it raises the question: “If there is no sign does that mean there are no children present and no need to watch for children?” For these reasons the Federal Highway Administration does not include the Children at Play sign in the MUTCD.

Additionally, parents should refrain from placing or allowing their children to place play devices such as Basketball Hoops and Hockey Goals in or near the public street, which promotes children to play in the street. The public street is not a playground.

#### **6. My street name sign is missing, who do I notify?**

Please call the [Department of Public Works](#) number (518)587-3550 ext-2910

#### **7. Why is a stop sign installed?**

The purpose of stop signs is to control the right-of-way assignment at an intersection.

#### **8. I feel that vehicles are speeding on my street, can I have a Stop Sign installed to slow traffic down.**

The MUTCD sets specific conditions that should exist when determining to install a Stop sign control at an intersection. Speeding traffic is not a condition that Stop sign control is permitted for use.

[FHWA FAQ](#); One of the complaints that people have in residential areas is that vehicles constantly speed by the front of their house. They are concerned about the safety of their children. These residents frequently request the erection of additional Stop signs. The addition of a Stop sign, however, usually does not solve the problem.

Many studies have shown that Stop signs are not an effective measure for controlling or reducing midblock speeds. In fact, the overuse of Stop signs may cause drivers to carelessly stop at the Stop signs that are installed. In Stop sign Observance Studies approximately half of all motorists came to a rolling stop and 25 percent did not stop at all. Stop signs can give pedestrians a false sense of safety if it is assumed that all vehicles will come to a complete stop at the proper location. A study conducted by Beaubien also showed that placing Stop signs along a street may actually increase the peak speed of vehicles, because motorists tend to increase their speed between Stop signs to regain the time spent at the Stop signs.

#### **9. What are the City of Saratoga Springs policies for installing a Stop sign?**

The City of Saratoga Springs, by State law, must comply with the guidelines established in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and New York State Supplement. Signs are installed at an intersection only if a careful evaluation of the

existing conditions indicates their installation is warranted. Pursuant to Section 1640, article 39, of the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law, authority is delegated to the legislating body (City Council) to order the installation of a Stop sign, Flashing Signal or Yield sign.

**10. Who do I contact to request a Stop sign be installed?**

Stop sign requests can be submitted by filling out the [Traffic Watch](#) request form located on the City Web Site under the [Public Safety Department](#) web page.

**11. Trucks drivers are ignoring the 5 Ton Limit signs on my street, who do I notify?**

In some case the trucks that are traveling on the street may be service trucks or delivery trucks heading to or coming from a destination along the street which is permitted for the truck operators to do. However, if you feel the truck operators are using the street as a short cut please call the Saratoga Springs Police Department non-emergency number (518)584-1800.