

# 4. TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNS



## 4.1 Stop Signs

### What are they?

Stop signs are used to assign right of way and to minimize accidents and personal injury by reducing potential conflicts among roadway users.

### Where are they installed?

Stop signs are typically installed on the minor volume approaches to an intersection, providing and favoring unobstructed flow along the major volume street. The Transportation Association of Canada has developed installation criteria and warrants for all-way stop control. Adherence to these guidelines brings about a greater understanding on the part of drivers who will tend to respect the stop control.

All-way stop control may be warranted at intersections which have a significant and relatively equal volume of traffic on each of the intersecting roadways, or where an unusual collision history exists. The volume warrant requires that the combined pedestrian and vehicular volumes on the minor street average 200 per hour for an eight hour period. The collision warrant may be satisfied where, regardless of volume, an average of 5 collisions per year deemed preventable by all-way stop control are reported over a five-year period.

All-way stop control may also be used as an interim measure prior to the installation of traffic signals and as an educational tool for an interim period when stop control at an intersection is being reversed.

### What are the issues?

- All-way stops are in effect full time and therefore should reflect traffic conditions as outlined in the warrant. They should not be used to address irregular traffic events or phenomena.
- A popular misconception is that stop signs can be used to solve any number of traffic related problems. Requests for stop signs to control speeding and reduce short-cutting are common. Approval of such requests can lead to the proliferation of all-way stops. Unwarranted all-way stops are ineffective and can have negative consequences as motorists speed in areas away from the stop sign to make up for lost time and they also become conditioned to 'not stop' or 'roll through' the intersection since there is seldom any conflicting traffic on the minor volume street. They also contribute to the unnecessary increase in noise, air pollution, and fuel consumption.